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# Two Sonnets*

By Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

## Colour

A BLUE-BLACK Nubian plucking oranges
At Jaffa by a sea of malachite,
In red tarboosh, green sash, and flowing white
Burnous—among the shadowy memories
That haunt me yet by these bleak Northern seas
He lives for ever in my eyes' delight,
Bizarre, superb in young immortal might—
A god of old barbaric mysteries.

Maybe he lived a life of lies and lust:
Maybe his bones are now but scattered dust:
Yet, for a moment he was life supreme,
Exultant and unchallenged: and my rhyme
Would set him safely out of reach of time
In that old heaven where things are what they seem.

## Gold

ALL day the mallet thudded, far below
My garret, in an old ramshackle shed
Where ceaselessly, with stiffly nodding head
And rigid motions ever to and fro,
A figure like a puppet in a show
Before the window moved till day was dead,
Beating out gold to earn his daily bread,
Beating out thin fine gold-leaf blow on blow.

And I within my garret all day long
To that unceasing thudding tuned my song,
Beating out golden words in tune and time
To that dull thudding, rhyme on golden rhyme.
But in my dreams all night in that dark shed
With aching arms I beat fine gold for bread.

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# The Bridegroom

By Elizabeth Kirby

My soul is like a window that is set ajar; like a room that is empty
I wait, oh, my Belovéd, for the sound of thy feet; early and late I sit and listen.
The world is very large, the night very dark; thou art a long time coming.
The garden is hushed as though a spell were set upon it; I think the garden sleeps.
Only the white flowers wake and keep watch,—the white flowers that smell sweet.
Oh, my Belovéd, my soul is hungry for thee. It is like a garden without seed; like an empty vessel.
I thirst for the feel of thine arms about my body, for the touch of thy lips.
I think I shall very soon die unless thou come quickly.
Come then, my Sweet, like rain on a dry country, and fill me with life.

My Belovéd came when I called him; he put his arms about me.
The flowers in the garden breathed through my window, and their breath was good to smell.
My Belovéd took my chin in the palm of his hand.
I closed my eyes, my limbs grew faint, a sweet thrill shook my body.
He took possession of me as a lord of his own estate.
His skin smelled of youth and growing things.
I gave myself to him gladly; I was not ashamed.
Both my soul and my body I gave him, as a man might surrender to his king.
As each bird yields to her own mate, and the flowers to the wind,—even so did I yield to my lover in the sweet-smelling night.

## THE BRIDEGROOM

I look on my Belovéd sleeping; he is beautiful in his strength.
There is a hush upon his eyes where the lids fall down like wings. There is a hush upon his lips; a fearful hush upon his body.
He is like an enchanted spirit; like a house from which the inhabitant has gone.
I long to stoop and wake him lest death should find him lying so.
I grow afraid when I think how far am I from my Belovéd. Though I give him my body we remain separate; that which is the soul of us cannot meet.
Awake or sleeping, we are like creatures suffering enchantment. We grope blindly to possess each other; we grope blindly in the dark.
Yet here and there are lamps set to guide us. For a moment they shine like warm stars, then flicker and die out.
And so we are ever seeking, as blind men seek each other in a large room.
I think of these things as I watch my Belovéd sleeping. I tremble and grow afraid.

My Belovéd came to me at midnight; he planted in me a rich gift.
In the morning I awoke full of joy, and walked softly all the day.
For that which he gave me was a living thing.
And now I am like a garden that will in a little while bear flowers; I am like a prepared soil.
Very soon I shall bring forth a child, either son or daughter.
Therefore I walk softly, breathless at the wonder of the thing.
Supposing the child should be a Browning, or a Rafael or a Christ?
Supposing he should discover that for which the whole world looks?
No wonder I walk softly, sweetly afraid.

Let the garden make merry, and the still places sing! Let my lover rejoice!
For, lo! I am delivered of a child; I have brought forth a son.
He is very small and weak and lovely. He lies at my breast like a young flower that is gathered early with the dew upon it.
One day he will grow strong; he will love women, and one woman will be to him as the moon to a child.
He will marry and beget children.
And this hand will set a hush upon some woman if it touch her; also these eyes will wake a magic in her own; and this sweet body be the kingdom of her love.
Or else the workers in beauty will claim him; so that he will paint pictures either in word or colour, and give a message to the world.
Or haply, if he be a sinner, he will come home to me for comfort at the end of the day.
Oh, I am full of gladness; my soul is well content.
Though my body suffered anguish a while since and is even now in pain, I am fully content.
Now I know certainly it is a good thing to be delivered of a child.

For many hours together I am restless. I wake in the night and move to and fro upon my bed. My desire is urgent.
I know not what it is that troubles me; I seek vainly for a reason.
In my pain I take paper and a pencil; I let my thoughts flow out.
The joy of words grips me—the shape and the colour and the living wonder of them. I love to handle them.
I dwell upon them as a lover dwells upon the form and face of his Belovéd.
I write with a burning thirst upon me, striving to lay hold on beauty.
When the desire is past I lay down my pen—I sigh like a man rising from prayer.
I am now as a traveller relieved of his burden.
I lie down and sleep.

## THE BRIDEGROOM

My Belovéd is a wondrous man; his beauty is past telling.
Dressed for the battle, he is more royal than any king; so straight is he, so strong, so tall and comely.
He is like a knight of old, riding forth to save the weak.
And when he lays his hand upon my cheek, my heart grows faint with love of him.
And when he puts his arms about me, I close my eyes to hide my joy.
And when his lips touch mine, I pray that I may die in such a moment.
So wonderful a man is my Belovéd; of so great might in love.

My Belovéd is not a stranger; I have known him since the world began.
I have seen him often in my dreams, though afar off.
I have felt him drawing closer to me through every day.
His presence has been with me at all seasons, though only dimly seen.
In hours of misery I have found heart again, yet for no reason.
I have said: "It will be well with me; I know it will be well."
And a comfort has crept in upon me; a certainty of coming good.
Now that was my Belovéd drawing nearer to me, with love-light in his eyes.
And that was his soul seeking mine across the world.

My Belovéd leaned down and caught me to him; he held me very fast.
He kissed me on the lips; he kissed my body; his fingers wandered in my hair.
We spoke no word; our bodies trembled; we clung together in the dark.
The night was gentle to us; there was no moon at all.
Only the stars looked on us, marvelling at the wildness of our love.
And all the while we held each other; we could not fall apart.
But at daybreak my Belovéd left me; he went to do battle in a strange land.
And now I sit alone and am glad for my body that has been kissed by him.

# My Son

By Sydney Oswald

My son is dead . . . lies in a lonely grave;
No stately burial his; no lengthy train
Of mourners bore to rest the honoured slain,
Who sleep with him. . . . They died that they might save
The cause of freedom; lest the Huns enslave
The whole wide world in one encircling chain. . . .
To free the weak, to cleanse the murderous stain
Of tyrants' lust, their fair young lives they gave.

My son is dead. . . . Never again will he
Come with light laughter and with honest eyes
Into the garden, which he loved so well:
Nor greet me with those lips which were the prize
And tender token of his love for me. . . .
We'll only meet in dreams? . . . Ah! who can tell?

# On Re-reading Thucydides*

By Maurice Maeterlinck

## I

At moments above all when history is in the making, in these times when great and as yet incomplete pages are being traced, pages by the side of which all that was already written will pale, it is a good and salutary thing to turn to the past in search of instruction, warning, and encouragement. In this respect the unwearying and implacable war which Athens kept up against Sparta for twenty-seven years, with the hegemony of Greece for a stake, presents more than one analogy with that which we ourselves are waging, and teaches lessons that should make us reflect. The counsels which it gives us are all the more precious, all the more striking or profound, inasmuch as the war is narrated to us by a man who remains, together with Tacitus, despite the striving of the centuries, the progress of life, and all the opportunities of doing better, the greatest historian that the earth has ever known. Thucydides is, in fact, the supreme historian, at the same time swift and detailed, scrupulously sifting his evidence but giving free play to intuition, setting forth none but incontestable facts, yet divining the most secret intentions and embracing at a glance all the present and future political consequences of the events which he relates. He is withal one of the most perfect writers, one of the most admirable artists in the literature of mankind; and from this point of view, in an entirely different and almost antagonistic world, he has not an equal save Tacitus. But Tacitus is before everything a wonderful tragic poet, a painter of foul abysses, of fire and blood, who can lay bare the souls of monsters and their crimes; whereas Thucydides is, above all, a great political

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moralist, a statesman endowed with extraordinary perspicacity, a painter of the open air and of a free State, who portrays the minds of those sane, ingenious, subtle, generous, and marvellously intelligent men who peopled ancient Greece. The one piles on the gloom with a lavish hand, gathers dark shadows which he pierces at each sentence with lightning-flashes, but remains sombre and oppressed on the very summits; whereas the other condenses nothing but light, groups together judgments that are so many radiant sheaves, and remains luminous and breathes freely in the very depths. The first is passionate, violent, fierce, indignant, bitter, sincerely but pitilessly unjust, and all made up of magnificent animosities; the second is always even, always at the same high level, which is that which the noblest endeavour of human reason can attain. He has no passion but a passion for the public weal, for justice, glory, and intelligence. It is as though all his work were spread out in the blue sky; and even his famous picture of the plague of Athens seems covered with sunshine.

## II

But there is no need to follow up this parallel, which is not my object. I will not dwell any longer—though perhaps I may return to them one day—upon the lessons which we might derive from that Peloponnesian War, in which the position of Athens towards Lacedæmon provides more than one point of comparison with that of France towards Germany. True, we do not there see, as in our own case, civilised nations fighting a morally barbarian people; it was a contest between Greeks and Greeks, displaying, however, in the same physical race two different and incompatible spirits. Athens stood for human life in its happiest development, gracious, cheerful, and peaceful. She took no serious interest except in the happiness, the imponderous riches, the innocent and perfect beauties, the sweet leisures, the glories and the arts of peace. When she went to war, it was as though in play, with the smile still on her face, looking upon it as a more violent pleasure than the rest, or as a duty joyfully accepted. She bound herself down to no discipline; she was never ready; she

improvised everything at the last moment, having, "with habits not of labour but of ease and courage, not of art but of nature," as Pericles said, "the double advantage of escaping the experience of hardships in anticipation and of facing them in the hour of need as fearlessly as those who are never free from them."*

For Sparta, on the other hand, life was nothing but endless work, an incessant strain, having no other objective than war. She was gloomy, austere, strict, morose, almost ascetic, an enemy to everything that excuses man's presence on this earth, a nation of spoilers, looters, incendiaries, and devastators, a nest of wasps beside a swarm of bees, a perpetual menace and danger to everything around her, as hard upon herself as upon others, and boasting an ideal which may appear lofty if it be man's ideal to be unhappy and the contented slave of unrelenting discipline. On the other hand, she differed entirely from those whom we are now fighting in that she was generally honest, loyal, and upright, and showed a certain respect for the gods and their temples, for treaties and for international law. It is none the less true that, if she had from the beginning reigned alone or without encountering a long resistance, Hellas would never have been the Hellas that we know. She would have left in history but a precarious trace of useless warlike virtues and of minor combats without glory; and mankind would not have possessed that centre of light towards which it turns to this day.

## III

What was to be the issue of that war? Here begins the lesson which it were well to study thoroughly. It would seem indeed as if, with the first encounters in that conflict, as in our own, the inexplicable will that governs nations were favouring the less civilised; and, in fact, Lacedæmon gained the upper hand, at least temporarily and sufficiently to abuse her victory to such a degree that she soon lost its fruits. But Athens held the evil will in

* This and the later passage from Pericles' funeral oration I have quoted from Richard Crawley's admirable translation of Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, now published in the *Temple Classics*.—A. T. de M.

check for seven-and-twenty years; for twenty-seven summers and twenty-seven winters, to use Thucydides' reckoning, she proved to us that it is possible, in defiance of probability, to fight against what seems written in the book of heaven and hell. Nay, more; at a time when Sparta—whose sole industry,whose sole training, whose only reason for existence and whose only ideal was war—was hugging the thought of crushing in a few weeks, under the weight of her formidable hoplites, a frivolous, careless, and ill-organised city, Athens—notwithstanding the treacherous blow which fate dealt her by sending a plague that carried off a third of her civil population and a quarter of her army—Athens for seventeen years definitely held victory in her grasp. During this period she more than once had Lacedæmon at her mercy, and did not begin to descend the stony path of ruin and defeat until after the disastrous expedition to Sicily, in which, carried away by her rhetoricians and bitten with inconceivable folly, she hurled all her fleet, all her soldiers, and all her wealth into a remote, unprofitable, unknown, and desperate adventure. She resisted the decline of her fortunes for yet another ten years, heaping up her sins against wisdom and simple common sense, and with her own hands drawing tighter the knot that was to strangle her, as though to show us that destiny is for the most part but our own madness, and that what we call unavoidable fatality has its root only in mistakes that might easily be avoided.

## IV

To point this moral was again not my real object. In these days, when we have so many sorrows to assuage and so many deaths to honour, I wished merely to recall a page written over two thousand years ago to the glory of the Athenian heroes who fell for their country in the first battles of that war. According to the custom of the Greeks, the bones of the dead that had been burnt on the battlefield were solemnly brought back to Athens at the end of the year, and the people chose the greatest speaker in the city to deliver the funeral oration. This honour fell to Pericles, son of Xanthippus, the Pericles of the golden

age of human beauty. After pronouncing a well-merited and magnificent eulogium on the Athenian nation and institutions, he concluded with the following words:

"Indeed, if I have dwelt at some length upon the character of our country, it has been to show that our stake in the struggle is not the same as theirs who have no such blessing to lose, and also that the panegyric of the men over whom I am now speaking might be by definite proofs established. That panegyric is now in a great measure complete; for the Athens that I have celebrated is only what the heroism of these and their like have made her, men whose fame, unlike that of most Hellenes, will be found to be only commensurate with their deserts. And if a test of worth be wanted, it is to be found in their closing scene; and this not only in the cases in which it set the final seal upon their merit, but also in those in which it gave the first intimation of their having any. For there is justice in the claim that steadfastness in his country's battles should be as a cloak to cover a man's other imperfections, since the good action has blotted out the bad, and his merit as a citizen more than outweighed his demerits as an individual. But none of these allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger. No; holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance and to let their wishes wait; and, while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success in the business before them, they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour, but met danger face to face, and, after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped not from their fear but from their glory.

"So died these men as became Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unfaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. And, not contented with ideas derived only from words of the advantages which are bound up with

the defence of your country, though these would furnish a valuable text to a speaker even before an audience so alive to them as the present, you must yourselves realise the power of Athens and feed your eyes upon her from day to day till love of her fills your hearts; and then, when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honour in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valour, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer. For by this offering of their lives, made in common by them all, they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and, for a sepulchre, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for its commemoration. For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb; and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten, with no tablet to preserve it except that of the heart. Take these as your model, and, judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valour, never decline the dangers of war. For it is not the miserable that would most justly be unsparing of their lives: these have nothing to hope for; it is rather they to whom continued life may bring reverses as yet unknown, and to whom a fall, if it came, would be most tremendous in its consequences. And surely, to a man of spirit, the degradation of cowardice must be immeasurably more grievous than the unfelt death which strikes him in the midst of his strength and patriotism!

"Comfort, therefore, and not condolence, is what I have to offer to the parents of the dead who may be here. Numberless are the chances to which, as they know, the life of man is subject; but fortunate indeed are they who draw for their lot a death so glorious as that which has caused your mourning, and to whom life has been so exactly measured as to terminate in the happiness in which it has been passed. Still, I know that this is a hard saying, especially when those are in question of whom you will be

constantly reminded by seeing in the homes of others blessings of which once you also boasted; for grief is felt not so much for the want of what we have never known as for the loss of that to which we have been long accustomed. Yet you who are still of an age to beget children must bear up in the hope of having others in their stead: not only will they help you to forget those whom you have lost, but they will be to the State at once a reinforcement and a security; for never can a fair or just policy be expected of the citizen who does not, like his fellows, bring to the decision the interests and apprehensions of a father. While those of you who have passed your prime must congratulate yourselves with the thought that the best part of your life was fortunate, and that the brief span that remains will be cheered by the fame of the departed. For it is only the love of honour that never grows old; and honour it is, not gain, as some would have it, that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness. . . .

"And, now that you have brought to a close your lamentations for your relatives, you may depart."

These words, spoken twenty-three centuries ago, ring in our hearts as though they were uttered yesterday. They celebrate our dead better than could any eloquence of ours, however poignant it might be. Let us bow before their sovereign beauty and before the great people that could applaud and understand.

# The Grayles

## By Stacy Aumonier

HENRY COTTESBY GRAYLE was a publisher of architectural and archæological books. He was a widower, and lived with his son and two daughters in a small house, to which was attached a studio and a large garden, in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park.

At the time of which I write the Grayles had become the centre of a set of people of varying degrees of celebrity in the artistic and dramatic world, and it is perhaps a little difficult to account for this. They were certainly a very devoted and likeable family, and the children called their father "Harry." One felt at once their innate kindness and their loyal affection for each other, but the mentality of neither of them was of a very high order, and I do not remember hearing any one of them express any particularly original or individual point of view. They were physically unattractive, having badly-proportioned figures, and they were all short-sighted, both the girls, Wanda and Olivia (or "Pan," as we called her), as well as the father, wearing thick glasses. The son, Arthur, was less short-sighted; he only wore pince-nez for reading, but he was an awkward-looking chap, with a head that seemed too heavy for his shoulders. To say that they were unselfish would be applying too mild a term to their dominant characteristic. I should imagine that they were one of the most elaborately unselfish families that ever existed. They carried this system of unselfishness to such a degree that it was always defeating its own end. For instance, Mr. Grayle, who hated the East Coast, would get an idea into his head that the East Coast was good for the girls, so he would let fall a hint that he would like to go to the East Coast for his holidays. Now Wanda and Pan also hated the East Coast, but they would pretend that they loved it, and would not like to go anywhere

else, because they secretly thought that their father wanted to go there. And Arthur would give up an invitation to go and stay with friends in Devonshire—a county that he adored—in order to enjoy the dubious benefits of the east wind for the same reason. There were also two extremely pretty girls, who frequented the tennis court. Their names were Toni and Mildred Sholt. They were actresses by profession, although they never by any chance seemed to have an engagement, except to play at special *matinées* for some society for the advancement of the Higher Drama, but they were fluffy, companionable girls. In the winter, or when the weather was unpleasant in the summer, we used to go into the studio, and Wanda and Pan roasted chestnuts, and we played most preposterous paper games, and talked. If the conversation at times became a little "precious," it had the compensating advantage of being extremely naïve, and often engagingly personal. We were always talking about each other's characters, and fiercely criticising each other behind our backs. This was not done in a spirit of tittle-tattle or malice. It was pure interest and a love of analysis.

People began to refer to the "Grayle set," but I am not sure that the Grayles themselves were the pivots of this set, though their garden and studio were undoubtedly its headquarters. I'm afraid many of us used to laugh about the Grayles even on their own court and in their own studio. In spite of the open house they kept, and the erratic company that enjoyed their hospitality, they had peculiar, fussy little mannerisms. And they encouraged each other in these. There were certain things that had always been, and consequently *had* to be. Arthur had to have porridge with his breakfast, and he had to have a tray of biscuits and anchovy paste and a glass of lime-juice to take up to his bedroom at night. Pan had to have a glass of hot milk at eleven-fifteen every morning, and always scrambled eggs on toast for breakfast. Wanda would not touch tea if the milk had been put in first, and no one would dream of interfering with the tradition that gave her the right to take the rest of the family to three lectures at the Royal Society of Arts every year. She had at some remote period joined this Society, and although the lectures bored the

whole family to death, they would come out chatting gaily, and persuade each other that the lecture was even more interesting than the last.

In fine, the family was intensely sentimental. They would not have acknowledged that; in fact, they laughed at and scorned sentimentality as expressed in sentimental plays and stories. They simply did not realise that the only difference lay in the fact that they did not express it. Of course, they all kissed each other, but they never gave expression to any extremely endearing or emotional terms. But they watched each other with a sort of furtively erotic zest, they pampered each other's whims, and silently studied each other's desires.

There was also an American woman who was nearly always there. She rejoiced in the name of Florence Cheesewright Cannifer. She was not so formidable a person as her name might suggest; in fact, she was delightful. She was broad—in every sense. She had broad shoulders and hips, and a broad, low brow and deep-set, kind, grey eyes. I could never quite locate her; she may have been some sort of relation. All the family kissed her (including Mr. Grayle), and they called her "Bee." She was the sort of person that one kissed automatically.

I need hardly tell you that all of us in the Grayle set were Socialists—at least, when I say Socialists, I mean that we were people supremely discontented with existing social conditions, although this discontent manifested itself in different ways. Mr. Grayle, who was a little more inured to these social conditions, voted Liberal as a sort of compromise, but both the girls and Arthur belonged to some Socialist organisation in Gray's Inn, and pursued an active propaganda.

When the war broke out the news dropped like a bombshell into the security of our comfortable ideals. I knew that the Grayles, with their intense humanitarian instincts, would be upset; but I hardly expected them to be as affected as they were. On the evening when it was announced that England had declared war, I found the whole family in the studio with Florence Cheesewright Cannifer and the Sholt girls and a rather dirty sculptor named Rohan Lees, who was supposed to be more or less engaged to Mildred Sholt. They were sitting round in a

circle immersed in newspapers, looking scared and tragic and—what surprised me most—definitely angry.

"It's detestable!" Wanda was muttering.

"Disgusting patriotism!" Pan ejaculated.

Later in the evening we tried to play a game called "'Ware Wilkins." It was a poor game at its best, but on this evening it fell particularly flat. It was played with cards, and just before you suspected someone of playing a certain card—I think it was the queen of diamonds—you had to call out "'Ware Wilkins," and then there were forfeits, and so on. It was a game that Mr. Grayle usually shone at, but on this occasion he was always at fault, which was deplorable, inasmuch as Wanda and Pan had obviously suggested the game to distract his mind. His mind was not distracted, and he only played because he imagined that the girls wanted to.

After that it became a sort of understood thing that the war as a subject was not to be discussed in the Grayle family. It was avoided—like an unclean thing. Occasionally people would be brought who did not understand this, and they would launch into discussions about the war, but they found themselves isolated, talking in detached groups, and the conversation never became general.

Certain events which followed were precipitated by the oratory of a certain Mr. Robson, who appeared at that time. He was an elderly man, with a sour, lugubrious countenance and a stoop. He had lived on the East Coast of Africa for seven years, and had contracted some chronic internal trouble that doctors agreed was incurable, but he might live for a long time. He spoke with a deep, booming voice like a park-keeper at closing time. He seemed quite out of his element at the Grayles', but indifferent to the fact. One got the idea that he would boom on in that voice, enunciating his unpalatable sophistries, in any climate or in any society. It made no difference to him if he were addressing a gang of coloured platelayers on an African railway or a young ladies' school on the South Coast. The mere fact of us calling him *Mr.* Robson showed that he was not one of us. He seemed like some vague, impersonal force against which all our most cherished ideas dashed in vain. One knew, of course, that the Grayle family thought about the war. In fact, they thought about

it too much, and they each secretly devoured their newspapers. With their quick intuitions and sympathies they suffered many of the horrors of the whole thing, only the ambition of each was that the others should not suffer these horrors. But Mr. Robson had no such scruples. He boomed on about the war from morning to night. He might have been Hansard himself, doomed to an eternal punishment of declaiming the redundant products of his volumes. Nothing could stop him, but occasionally some member of the family or their friends would flash bitingly across his path and interject some facile argument. He would look at them with an expression of unutterable sadness, like one who had lost the faculty of listening, but who deplores any diversion to a prescribed idea, and would then continue from the point at which he was interrupted.

I remember Arthur telling me one day that any doubts he held that the war was in any way justifiable were entirely dispelled by listening to Mr. Robson.

"I don't mean to say," he said, "that the English Government is any more culpable than the German. Probably it's not. But there's not much to choose between them. Civilisation is rotten to the core. The whole thing has been worked by contractors, politicians, and wire-pullers all over the world. This Robson represents the official mind. You can do nothing with it. It has no fluidity, no sympathy, no intelligence. It's just an atrophied organ."

It was surprising, therefore, to hear Arthur that same evening break a lance with Mr. Robson, and even get angry with him; and he was vigorously seconded by Wanda and Pan and, in a more cold-blooded manner, by Rohan Lees.

"Do you never consider what you owe to your country? Liberty, freedom—power?" droned Mr. Robson.

"Yes," interposed Pan, "or slums, wretchedness, and disgraceful social inequality?"

"The social system," continued Mr. Robson, "was not invented in a night by some fiend, as some of you young people seem to think. It is the result of the steady growth of thousands of years, history, character, environment, the survival of the fittest."

"Of the physically fittest," said Wanda. "It's no good,

Mr. Robson. Nothing can justify war. It's simply a return to the beast age."

Florence Cheesewright Cannifer took pity on the poor man, and told us we were not to bully him for being a patriot. "It's natural to love one's country," she said. We all agreed with her, but protested that one should not love one's country at the expense of other countries. The discussion took its normal course—that is to say, round in a circle without leading anywhere—when "Harry" Grayle came in. I thought he looked tired, and I knew that as a matter of fact he was a little worried by a newspaper agitation for conscription. Of course, he said nothing about this, but I noticed him looking narrowly at Arthur, and I believed he was summing up the physical attributes of his son, and wondering whether he would pass the Army doctor if conscription were brought in. There was a little chap called Skinner who used to come and play tennis sometimes. I don't know what he was by profession. We used to call him "Scaly Skinner." I think because he used to get very hot, and his nose peeled in the summer. Directly the war broke out Scaly Skinner rushed off and joined something, and was made a corporal. We were all very much amused about this, and often laughed about Corporal Scaly Skinner! When Mr. Grayle came in on this evening he told us quietly that he had just heard that "Scaly Skinner" had been killed. I need hardly say that this news caused a profound impression. Pan, with genuine tears in her eyes, emphasised her view that the whole idea of war was more unspeakable and disgusting than ever, and we all felt that if Mr. Robson said much more we should jump on him.

As a matter of fact, this gentleman said very little more, but he made one cryptic utterance that was destined to have a far-reaching effect. He looked lugubriously round the studio and sighed, as though he had gathered the full complement of our idealistic thoughts, and then his voice once more boomed forth in level tones:

"Do you ever realise that you are only allowed to have these ideas, and to express them, by virtue of the fact that men like your friend, Mr. Scaly Skinner, are out at the Front fighting for you and giving their lives for you?"

There was an imperceptible pause, and then Mr. Grayle,

glancing at his son, nodded and said: "That's very true." I believe he glanced at Arthur apprehensively because he dreaded what effect this unarguable remark might have on his impressionable son. He muttered "That's very true" almost automatically, because he realised that it *was* an abstract truth. It came out before he had had time to consider the effect. I saw Arthur catch his father's eye and take in his pale, worried glance, and I know that in a flash he thought, "Father thinks I ought to join. He's too decent to say so, but he's a little ashamed of me."

I remember very little more of what was said that evening. I think Florence Cheesewright came to the rescue by talking about "some dandy ponjee she'd bought that afternoon at a store on Oxford Street." I know we didn't play any games, and we broke up early.

My next intimation of a development in the matter came by way of a visit from Wanda two days later. She said she and Pan were in trouble. It was like this: They —the girls—had come to the conclusion that Arthur was worrying. They believed that he felt a call to join the Army. Of course, he was much too unselfish to worry *them* about it, and they believed that he thought too much about their feelings. They didn't think he *would* join, simply because he knew how unhappy it would make them. It was very difficult for them. Of course, they simply *loathed* the idea of his going; at the same time they knew it would be selfish to impose their own feelings to such an extent that he acted against his own conscience and inclination.

I asked them what their father thought, but they said that he had not spoken, and they should not worry him about it, especially as there might be nothing in it. I said that if it would be satisfactory to them I would sound Arthur and find out what he did think.

I tackled him the same evening, but he would only talk about Scaly Skinner. Mr. Robson's remark about Scaly Skinner seemed to have bitten deep, but I believe he was really thinking more about his father's glance and his acquiescence to Mr. Robson's view. I could only report to Wanda that it *did* seem as though his conscience troubled him in the matter. After that the girls, I thought, behaved very splendidly. In an almost imperceptible

manner they modified their views. They listened more leniently to Mr. Robson's diatribe, and took a more technical interest in the operations on hand. This change of view was not lost on Arthur. He thought, "The girls think I ought to go." And Mr. Grayle thought, "The girls think Arthur ought to join. It would be selfish of me to interpose."

I do not want to dwell on the heartburnings that went on in the Grayle family up to that time when Arthur walked down one morning to a recruiting office in the Strand and offered himself as a private. I can only say that he joined the Army in the way that he went to the East Coast, because he somehow believed his family wished it. He was sent first of all down to a place near Bedford, and occasionally got a few days' leave. The atmosphere of the Grayles' house immediately altered. This was in October, so, of course, the garden was deserted, and the girls and "Harry" seemed to prefer the drawing-room or their bedroom to the studio. Mr. Robson had taken his departure, as though his mission were fulfilled, and he were at liberty to scatter the seeds of his moribund philosophy in some other clime. We never played games, and the girls started their interminable knitting.

They always spoke of Arthur in cheerful voices, but they could not control their strained faces when the cold rain beat down on the studio roof on the dark evenings. One instinctively thought of anchovy biscuits and lime-juice, and wondered how Arthur was faring. When he came home on leave he looked surprisingly fit and spoke cheerfully, though he told me on the quiet that "it was damnable," and that he "was heartily fed up with it." On those occasions we always held high revel, and played "'Ware Wilkins" or some such game in the studio, and the Sholt girls came in and anyone else who got wind of Arthur's visit. I got the impression that the Grayle family did not desire tremendously to be alone on these occasions; I think they were a little afraid. It is so much easier to keep bright and gay when there are others about.

Arthur did not go till April, and I had the doubtful privilege of being present at his last leave. I must say candidly that it was awful. It was so horribly strained and unreal. When it came time for Arthur to go, the

only person who was allowed to cry was Florence Cannifer, and this she did right loyally. He might have been going to post a letter, for all the effusion there was between his family and himself. They pecked at each other as though they were kissing through a glass screen, and thought it rather amusing but impossible. Arthur said "So-long, Harry," to his father, and the latter said, "By-bye! Have you packed that stuff for your feet?"

They watched him go furtively, hovering amongst each other and afraid to look at each other's faces. We went back to the drawing-room after he had gone, and I talked to Mr. Grayle about early French Renaissance architecture, and the girls encouraged me. I felt that it gave them power to look at their father's face. I admired old Grayle very much that evening; he controlled himself amazingly, for I believe he was much more upset than the girls.

Of course, the very thing happened that one would expect to happen to a family nervously constituted like the Grayles, and it happened with dramatic suddenness. Arthur had been out there less than a month, and they had received three letters from him, all couched in cheery terms. He did not seem to have received any of the elaborate packages that had been sent, but he was apparently having the time of his life. And then one day the news came crashing across the horizon of three strained lives. Arthur was "missing, believed killed." This is perhaps the most disturbing news any family can receive, and the Grayles no longer pretended to ride serenely. They were terribly distraught, and Pan developed an illness which served the useful purpose of distracting the other two. It seemed she had been taking sleeping draughts, and had taken too much. Wanda and her father nursed Pan assiduously, and Pan kept up her illness as long as possible, because she saw that it was doing the others good.

A week later a correction appeared in the official announcements. "Previously 'missing, believed killed,' should now read, 'wounded, not missing': MIDDLESUSSEX, 7th (T.F.), GRAYLE, 9093, A. G."

When I saw the face of old Mr. Grayle reading this correction I thought that the gods could not have chosen a more unfortunate victim for their unholy jest. He cried

in front of the girls. Of course, the matter only lasted inside a minute, but it was the most terrible minute I ever lived through.

Then they all went to the War Office. They spent ten days there, asking questions of most unlikely people, and making each other drink copious draughts of hot milk in an A.B.C. in Westminster Bridge Road. It was a time of great congestion, and they got no information till they heard that Arthur was back and in hospital at Folkestone. The poor chap had been badly wounded, and had lost his right leg below the knee and had a shrapnel wound in his back. I did not see the Grayles when the news of this arrived; they had all gone to Folkestone, and there they remained for three months, till Arthur was well enough to be moved. But in the meantime more surprising news had arrived, which was nothing less than that Arthur had received a D.S.O.—or was it a D.C.M.? It was not, in any case, a V.C., but it was some high order given in recognition of conspicuous gallantry in face of the enemy!

The official story was that he held a section of a trench single-handed, when all the other defenders had been killed or wounded, for seven hours till reinforcements arrived, and thus saved an important position in the line.

I went down to Folkestone twice and saw Arthur when he was on the move again. He seemed quite cheerful, and they had fitted him up with a very nice artificial leg. He seemed disinclined to talk about his experiences, so I naturally avoided referring to the war. The family were living in rooms down there, and Mr. Grayle came up to town twice a week to business. It was not till about two months later—when Arthur had been invalided out of the Army—and the family were once more back at the house in Regent's Park, that he gave me any intimation that he would care to talk. We were sitting in his room upstairs after dinner one evening, and, finding him in the mood, I asked him if he could tell me how he won his medal. He puffed at his pipe for a long time, and then he said:

"Honestly, my dear chap, I only have the vaguest notion. I knew I should be frightened, but I never thought it possible to have such a ghastly fear. When I first came under fire I was sick—actually physically sick. . . . I don't remember a bit how long the whole thing lasted. One felt

that one was looking out over the edge of creation and trying to keep back things that wanted to prove one had never lived. I was horribly frightened. Believe me, I wasn't thinking of the guv'nor or the girls; I was in a stark, staring terror of death. . . . For I felt that after this there could be nothing. . . . It was just pre-neolithic, as though man had never been born, as though there was nothing. . . . When night came, I didn't believe it had ever been daylight. A shell struck the angle of our trench; four chaps were blown to bits. A chap named Rettison—he was rather a cad, as a matter of fact—was smashed up near me. . . . I felt his blood running over my boots. The trench was crumbling. Honestly, I went mad. There was a whole bunch of those damned little things you throw—you know, 'grenades.' I picked them up one at a time and threw them about. . . . I threw one at the dead body of Rettison—I felt I couldn't stand it there. If I saw anything move, I flung a grenade. I denied God, and I believe I foamed at the mouth. I may have thrown them at English or French or anyone. I should have thrown one at our Colonel if he had been there—perhaps I did—I had lost all cosmic sense. . . . I was nothing—just a crumbling negation waiting for the earth to close up. And then something happened. I believe I dropped one of the damned things on my foot. . . . I swung out into a darkness."

Arthur coughed, and rolled his pipe round in his mouth. His lips were trembling in a peculiar way, and I said I thought I heard someone downstairs calling. I took Arthur's arm, and we found them all in the drawing-room. On a table was the medal that Arthur had lately received from the King. They were looking at it as we came in, and they all looked round at us. There was a curiously strained moment, in which a jumble of emotions seemed to vibrate through the room. I did not know why this should be so, or how much of Arthur's story the others knew, but it was Florence Cheesewright's suave voice as usual, with its soothing upward inflection, that seemed to relieve the tension:

"My! what a dandy ribbon!"

# Musical Notes

## By Edwin Evans

By the time these notes appear in print the Shaftesbury season of opera in English will have come to an end, if present arrangements hold good, and it is within range of possibility that details will have been announced of another season elsewhere. Meanwhile, the third new English opera has duly made its appearance. Dr. Ethel Smyth's setting of *The Boatswain's Mate* is clever, very clever—in some ways too clever, for it deals in a fashion, which has some analogies with *Der Rosenkavalier*, with situations and characters far too simple to sustain such a superstructure. As a result, it gives an impression of self-conscious cleverness which does not, however, render the music any less exhilarating. If the pleasure it gives contains a base alloy of irritation, the reason is to be sought not in the sophistication of the music, but in that of the plot, which is made to serve the purposes of feministic propaganda. It is true that the author, Mr. W. W. Jacobs, on this occasion backed the grey mare. He made his point so well that there was not the slightest need to emphasise it with intrusions that remind one of Gregory powder in the jam. But advocates are seldom discreet.

A number of folk-songs are used with lines having no analogy of sentiment with the original texts. Although Dr. Smyth can quote illustrious precedents for this course, the result is not altogether happy, for, sadly as we neglect our wealth of traditional music, certain tunes have associations which are apt to get in the way. Instead of taking these tunes and using them elaborately, it would have been wiser to fashion others in the same idiom, and use them simply. It would also have been more difficult, but I unhesitatingly give Dr. Smyth credit for not shrinking from difficulty. It is a question of æsthetic nicety, but possibly the true explanation is that, with a German production in sight, there was some advantage in being able to prove authenticity on demand. That is the deepest mystery in

the opera: its intended production in Germany. One shudders to think what German singers, graduates of all the *Hofopern*, would have made of the simple boatswain and the Irish soldier. Possibly the writer of some *Opernführer* would have endowed them with symbolical meanings and deduced a political pamphlet. One never knows. The composer herself has set the example by reading into it a femininist tract, and she is sufficiently familiar with the German *Musikschriftsteller* to know of what he is capable. Alas, that we should be robbed of the joke! It is one of the lesser tragedies of the war.

Of the performance it is late to speak in detail, but the staging and general scenic effect were remarkably good. Better still, they gave proof of an ambition to break away, not too ambitiously at first, from the operatic conventions. The presence of a "low comedy" element threatened to destroy the already slender unity of style, and the acting of these parts might have been toned down, but in other ways the stage aspect was far more homogeneous than the music. The Shaftesbury management may well be gratified with the general effect, and if they have any more productions equally good up their sleeve, let us hope they will soon be given facilities for them elsewhere. Neither *The Critic* nor *The Boatswain's Mate* is epoch-making on its own merits, but they may yet serve to date an era.

Once again it is gratifying to note that enterprising programmes have filled halls to which the classics deemed safe drew much smaller audiences. The Royal Philharmonic Society is quite eclipsing the attractions offered by either Sir Henry Wood, whose hands are probably tied in the matter, and the London Symphony Orchestra, which, however, is experiencing a nervous twitching in the direction of a wider repertory. The contrast in the respective announcements a few months back amounted almost to a challenge, to which the public has at last given a plain answer. A feature of the season has been the spasmodic runs on certain of the modern composers. Stravinsky has had his turn. Just now Debussy is to the fore. Under Sir Thomas Beecham's direction the Philharmonic has given us the Nocturnes, which are far too seldom heard in their complete form, and a first performance of "Iberia," one of the set of orchestral "Images," and the London Sym-

phony Orchestra promises us the symphonic sketches "La Mer," erroneously described in the announcements as a "suite." The designation really matters, for they are sketches in the sense in which a painter uses the word. They have been performed before, but, if memory serves, not adequately.

Another pleasant feature is again the amount of good chamber music to be heard every week. The response of the public is slow but still perceptible, and there is evidently response from another direction, for I learn that Mr. Frank Bridge finds himself in the position, surely unique for a British composer, of having two string quartets in course of publication simultaneously. If only a portion of the money fruitlessly expended on isolated performances which have long since been forgotten had been devoted to the purpose of making English music accessible in print, we might have had more progress to report. However successful a work may be on a first performance, a long interval usually elapses before it receives another; but each printed copy that falls into the hands of a music-lover, lay or professional, is a useful instrument of propaganda.

After a lapse of many years Debussy, too, is reverting to chamber music. Hitherto his only contribution to this branch has been the well-known quartet—one of the most strictly formal works to which he has put his name. The new compositions are to be described as sonatas, but Debussy's conception of form in music has varied so considerably that the design of the quartet is not at all likely to be discerned in the new pattern. Curiosity will not have to wait long. The first sonata is for 'cello, and Mr. Warwick Evans is to play it at the Æolian Hall on March 4th. The next is for oboe, viola, and harp, which prompts a train of thought leading back to Mr. Lionel Tertis, the founder of an English school of viola-players, to whom the great composers of the Continent might do well to devote some attention. Mr. Tertis is already responsible for an array of works for his instrument by British composers, two of which he played at a recent concert of Mr. Arthur Rubinstein. His ingenious expansion of the traditional field of the viola might well stimulate a Debussy, a Ravel, or a Stravinsky.

# THE WAR OF LIBERATION

## Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

By Major De Brézé Darnley-Stuart-Stephens

In 1895, while occupied on a mission from the French Government to Mr. Cecil Rhodes in connection with an endeavour to obtain in South Africa native transport for General Duchesne's expeditionary force engaged in the conquest of Madagascar, I met at a dinner-party at Government House, Capetown, a Captain Von Coöper, whose ship, the cruiser *Bismarck*, had been showing the German flag along the dreary shores of the huge territory which has, owing to the generalship of Louis Botha, just passed under another and more suitable flag. Later on I had at Zanzibar the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with quite the most delightful mannered German naval officer I have ever drifted across in all my experiences of four of the world's continents. It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise to the writer when one foggy morning in November, 1899, I "fetched against," to use his own sailor phrase, this genial seaman from across the North Sea on a platform at Euston. We were both bound for Barrow, there to witness the launching at Vickers-Maxim's shipyard of the then most powerful battleship in the world, the Japanese *Mikasa*, afterwards Togo's renowned flagship at the blockade of Port Arthur. We did due credit to the princely hospitality of the late Colonel Albert Vickers —peace to his ashes—and by the time that we got back to London from the great northern manufactory of marine monsters for all and sundry Von Coöper and myself were in a mood to swear eternal protestations of unalterable friendship. Perhaps the one reason that prevented us from entering into so touching a declaration of international comity was the fact that the tall, pointed-moustached

Prussian naval officer who looked for all the world like a French *chef d'escadron* of Cuirassiers (my friend in the Corps Diplomatique domiciled in London fifteen years back will recognise the portrait), was then Naval Attaché—official spy—at the German Embassy, and I was an enterprising and graceless individual who had escaped from two years' detention in the first-class fortress of Koenigsberg under a sentence for military espionage by the Imperial Supreme Court of Leipzig. Like men of the world we tacitly agreed to ignore certain mutually awkward features of our antecedents. You see, much is contained in the fact that we could not very well get at each other in England, a neutral ground, and so, in the name of the Prophet, we drank beer!! One day, after I had come back from the Chinese Boxer business of 1900, I met at the Imperial Restaurant, Regent Street, with Captain Von Coöper a former Under-Lieutenant of his on the *Bismarck* (the first cruiser of that designation), one Herr Garlick. My friend, who is now Admiral Von Coöper with the Kaiser's manacled armada, informed me that his ex-subaltern had on retiring from the navy secured through his (Coöper's) influence a position in the London offices of the Hamburg-Amerika line. This was of no interest to me; it would, however, have been considerably so if the Kaiser's official marine spy had supplemented his remark that Garlick, in addition to organising from Cockspur Street the dispositions for, under the German flag, yachting tours in floating palaces to the Mediterranean and the West Indies, found time to act as German Secret Police Master of the thriving English market towns of London and Westminster. This delicate morsel of information as to "kolossal" German cheek I picked up for myself without endeavouring to "tap" Garlick's whilom commander. For, in the first place, I knew that Von Coöper was, as became all good military or naval attachés, "sly, devilish sly," not to be drawn, and, in the second, I declared with sincere immodesty to the Military Attaché in London of another Great Power, that, as I somewhat coarsely expressed myself, I felt capable "of working this particular Teutonic 'pill garlic' for all he was worth." That I did so is shown by this extract from a report that I addressed to an official friend in a European capital some eight months subsequent to my having con-

sumed with the Captain and ex-Lieutenant the very excellent food and no less excellent Chambertin provided by a Regent Street tradesman of discernment.

"I have learned from G. on an occasion when he was markedly under the influence of what I might term vinous benevolence, the whole story of his appointment to the amazing position he holds here (London).

"It appears that the position of what the people in Berlin have the monstrous impudence to term the 'English Councillor of the Active Service Secret Police' fell vacant in February, 1901, in consequence of the promotion to the headquarters in Berlin of the incumbent, one Richard Cuers; and Lt.-General Von Schneiber, the Chief of the Cartographical Department of the Minister of War (a department in intimate relations with the Active Service Police), proposed to give the vacant well-paid post to whichever of the spies working in France or Great Britain should bring off the boldest stroke during the current year. My sometime acquaintance, Mr. James Brand, otherwise Excellency Colonel Von Windham, who failed to catch me in Berlin in 1897, and who is the Chief now of the Kaiser's Political Police, acquiesced, and an elaborate programme was drawn up with true Teutonic thoroughness, and authority given for fixed point commissioners, district inspectors, and communication messengers, the staff of the 'actives,' to take part in this stimulating, if somewhat perilous, competition. The prize fell to Max Garlick, who was last German Secret Police Councillor in France for the Departments of the Nord, the Pas-de-Calais, the Somme, and in Belgium for the Ardennes. Now this ex-naval lieutenant, who served on the African station under the Naval Attaché here, Captain Von Coöper (had this connection anything to do with his appointment?), holds the important, albeit a trifle anxious and wearing, appointment of Polizeirath for London!!!—is it conceivable for Prussian insolence to travel further?—and his unofficial (I was nearly writing 'official') residence is the Windsor Hotel, Victoria Street, almost opposite the Army and Navy Stores. Also, in addition to his present dazzling grade in our friends' spy service, this versatile mouchard condescends to put in a few hours' daily desk work in the offices of the Hamburg-Amerika line." After the receipt

of the above letter an official of the French Counter-Espionage Department, M. Sébille, came over here and watched, as a cat watches a mouse, the movements of Herr the Polizeirath for London. It may be recalled that it was through the trap set by the Chief of the French Counter-Espionage Department, M. Hennion, and his deputy, M. Sébille, that the traitor, Sub-Lieutenant Ullmo, of the French torpedo boat *Carabine*, was arrested at Toulon and subsequently degraded and sent to solitary imprisonment for life. Decidedly, in M. Sébille, the Polizeirath found more than his match. I would back all the time the nimble Gallic brain against Teutonic wits. This by the way.

The winner of that surely most singular of all prize competitions had under his argus eye a little army of twelve thousand German spies, all of them resident in these realms of ours, many of them naturalised British subjects.

Eight-tenths of this advance guard of an army of invasion were reserve officers and non-coms. who had come here to make more money than they could make in their beloved Fatherland. And only some two thousand of these, could it be ascertained, were agents on Garlick's pay list.

The rest worked and dared, willy-nilly, for exactly the princely remuneration of nothing at all, they being the poor devils of reservists who, not possessing special means of "stealing our thunder," had to spy and periodically report on such matters as came within their purview in accordance with the pledge they had to sign before receiving in Germany their permission to cross the Fatherland's frontier. The benediction that he received from headquarters at Berlin all to the contrary, Garlick, when suffering from a bad head, made some ghastly *faux pas* in the dealing with confidential papers. In the second year of the holding of his high office a "staff ride" in the Eastern counties was organised by a number of German officers in mufti.

By some means or other in Herr Polizeirath's waste-paper basket was found the following document reconstructed from many fragments:

"A German surprise force has been landed in England, the British Navy having been evaded in a fog. Special

idea for staff ride. An infantry division has been disembarked on the stretch of coast between Cromer and Yarmouth, and its two brigades are concentrated on these towns. Temporarily the communications with Germany are interrupted by a victory of the British Fleet. The two brigades are ordered to march concentrally on Norwich and to live on the country while so doing. Problem: follow the march routes of both brigades, show what food for how many men and beasts you would be sure to find on each route. Cromer and Yarmouth have been bared of provisions by our (German) troops, and Norwich is known to be evacuated and bared of all necessaries by British troops."

When I gummed on tissue paper this gleaning from the waste-paper receptacle in Cockspur Street, I regarded it as merely an interesting example of the work of a Teutonic military pedagogue. To-day, in the light of current events, this relic of German preparation some dozen years ago tends to give one an unpleasant smack in the face. Well, be it stated that Garlick received the "sack" the month Togo annihilated the Russian fleet at Tsushima.

The sailor was, I suppose, by way of making a complete change, succeeded by a cavalry major, a cousin of Baron Von Eckardstein, the monstrous scamp who married the late Sir John Maple's daughter. He lived in a flat in Ashley Gardens. It is remarkable how fond the Police-masters were of the Victoria quarter, and his merry conceit was to use various packs for spying purposes. During the three years that he lived in our midst the numbers steadily rose of German cavalry officers hunting in England and the sister isle. My friends at the Boulevard St. Germain kept a close eye on those sportsmen from across the Rhine.

For example, in the winter of 1908 twenty-one French, Belgian, and Italian officers were able to afford the expense and had to obtain leave to hunt in Great Britain. Apparently, German officers found it easier to obtain money and furlough, for the same season saw sixty-nine of these warriors riding behind our M.F.H.s.

But perhaps the scope of the varied activities of the "Polizeirath of London" and the peculiar qualities of his *confrères* will best be indicated by the reading of the follow-

document, which is a copy of one which mysteriously took wings to itself from Berlin.

### Instructions to German Spies.

*Translation of a Secret Document issued by the German Intelligence Department.*

1.—It is necessary for every officer who aspires to intelligence employment to be possessed of these qualities: keen observation, a good memory, accuracy, patience, determination, and, above all, secretiveness.

2.—The necessity for thoroughly sifting information when engaged upon a peace reconnaissance (spying in peace-time in a foreign country—C, S, S) calls for infinite patience. The slightest display of anxiety or undue interest may arouse suspicions that may foil the inquirer's object and seriously interfere with future intelligence work in the same country. The factors which call for patience in the collection of military and naval statistics (the German official euphemism for secret service) demand also determination of no ordinary kind. The work is generally carried out alone, cut off from one's country and family, and under pressing conditions. There is no relaxation, and often the temptation to give up the mission will arise. This is the time for the officer to say to himself: "To find out this and that I have come, and until I have discovered it I will not return." Often an unexpected clue is obtained when all hopes have been lost. This clue may set a seeker for information on a certain scent that enables him to piece up scraps of information, which in turn can be pieced by the statistics section into a very serviceable mosaic. It is precisely this mosaic work which constitutes the art of an intelligence officer. For example, he obtains a scrap of information here, another there, and when, in dealing with naval affairs, he has asked questions at various times and at various places from three or four gunnery officers, a dozen midshipmen, and as many more petty officers, he can build up a very good idea of what he wanted to know.

3.—Secretiveness and caution are essential qualities for an Intelligence officer employed abroad. A secret told,

even to a brother officer in one's regiment, soon ceases to be a secret.

*An oath is to be extracted from a married officer employed on foreign intelligence work that he will not communicate information regarding his movements and doings in a foreign country even to his wife.*

Nor does secretiveness consist only in holding one's tongue. If certain habits are not cultivated in ordinary garrison life, the most guarded lips will not save one from disaster when employed in the country of one of our neighbours.

4.—Diaries, letters, and bills should never be left about. A waste-paper basket is, as the Dreyfus case proved, a deadly snare, however small the morsels that are cast into it. The fire is the only place for papers which one wants to discard. Blotting-paper should be dealt with as any other. Every pocket should be turned out before going to bed and when changing clothes. Memoranda for one's own use, when it is indispensable to put complicated information in writing, should be written in a style and language that a stranger could not understand the true meaning of, and every word should be weighed. It is astonishing how, with practice, one can convey to a trained colleague in the Section, in seemingly plain language, news which no third person perusing the letter could understand. It is far preferable, this faculty, than to devise elaborate codes, which may lead to misunderstanding in the Section and arouse suspicion abroad.

5.—Restaurants and railway platforms should be invariably avoided when conversation is desirable upon confidential subjects. Even in seemingly secluded localities one's precincts should invariably be carefully examined before interviewing an informer, or unbosoming oneself to a messenger from the Section. When sitting in public rooms it is advisable to get to a corner table, unless a window or a verandah be close to one, and in all cases it is well to have one's back to the wall. *It is rarely advisable to try to conceal one's nationality, but at the same time it is often desirable for officers to assume, when in Russia or England, the character and accent of a South German, and to allow it to be understood that he is a member of the Roman Catholic faith.*

To conceal one's profession is, of course, a different thing from hiding one's exact place of birth and religious denomination. The officer who would pretend to be other than a German would divide his attention between keeping up the disguise and attaining his end, instead of concentrating all his energies on his task.

6.—The above are precepts, but practice alone makes perfect. Having dealt with the characteristics required of an officer employed in a foreign country, let now be considered the special attainments which he should possess:

I.—A wide general knowledge. The universal application of mechanical and scientific inventions to the needs of ordinary life, which is a feature of our day, extends also to warlike preparations. In this connection it is recommended that the intelligence officer, if employed in England, should provide himself with copies of the latest edition of *The Technical Dictionary in Six Languages*, published by Archibald Constable and Co., London, and if he is engaged with naval affairs he should purchase the *Encyclopædia of Ships and Shipping*, edited by Henry B. Mason, and published by the Shipping Encyclopædia, Ltd., Chichester House, Chancery Lane, London, and also the *Nautical Technical Dictionary for the Navy*, published at Pola by the Mitteilungen Aus Dem Gebiete Des Seewesens. Where electricity is concerned, a mere knowledge of items will not suffice; its elementary principles must be understood. In the case of harbours, an accurate description of piers, jetties, breakwaters, docks, and wharves is necessary. The exact nature, capacity, uses of various craft, boats, lighters, launches, whether steam, heavy oil engine, or petrol motor, must be well understood by the officer, as must also the conventional description of tides, and the difference between a landsman's and seaman's terminology in this particular. Useful information on these last points may be elicited by the hiring of a small yacht.

II.—*The officer who has prepared himself by an exhaustive course of technical study cannot fail to acquit himself in Intelligence work, which is more fruitful of distinction than most of the duties of his profession.*

III.—A knowledge of languages is not of absolute importance to an intelligence officer, but if two men otherwise

suitable are working in a neighbouring country, the one who knows the language of that country has an immeasurable advantage over the other. Yet if the knowledge of the language is a powerful weapon, the concealment of such knowledge renders it more formidable still. It is important that an officer should be consistent in this matter, the course adopted after mutual consideration of all the circumstances, the determination whether to understand those around you or not to, places one in some tantalising positions later on.

IV.—When expecting information from an informer, whether soldier, sailor, or civil individual, it is sometimes advisable to bring him a long night journey to the appointed rendezvous. When tired out or hungry such a person will be more communicative than one whose creature comforts have been attended to; for this reason the examination should be begun with the least possible delay. As a consequence, the interrogator obtains additional control over his agent by holding out the promise of early and liberal treatment for full and frank information. His answers can be checked by those which he may give later on when he has had leisure to improve on or otherwise alter his story. Where a very important point is in view it is advisable, if possible, that two officers of the Section might meet. If this could be safely arranged, one questioner can supplement any omissions on the part of the other, and the agent is more likely to get flurried. It is, moreover, recommended in such a case that one of the officers retire ostentatiously to another part of the room and consult some Major book. Meanwhile his associate should not allow the agent one single instant for quiet reflection. This is an important point. The most obdurate or wily informant will generally have the truth extracted from him if he is kept on the march long enough.

V.—In dealing with candidates for employment as spies special care must be used. Their object is usually twofold, viz., to discover how much one knows and to make money over the transaction. It is always best, when dealing with this species of traitor, to let him, or her, do all the talking. They generally begin: "I heard from a certain friend that you are interested in getting information for a newspaper?" A statement which should be received

with apparent bewilderment throughout the interview, an indifferent, and at the same time puzzled, attitude should be maintained. The visitor, as a rule, leaves completely mystified and foiled in his attempt. If in England he may be very likely a police detective. Although there are a considerable sprinkling of reserve soldiers in the English police, any of them who endeavours to discover a foreign intelligence officer can generally be at once themselves detected, as they are, almost invariably where military affairs are concerned, an extremely stupid and ill-informed class of men. Agents should be mystified by being closely questioned on unimportant and wholly irrelevant subjects, everything being done to conceal the officer's real object. Great interest should be evinced in the actual strength of a battalion or a ship's company, while a corresponding languid indifference manifested when items of interest are divulged. It does not follow, however, that a straightforward question should never be put; beating about the bush arouses suspicion, and gives time to concoct something, whereas a straight question, suddenly put, often takes an informer off his feet. Most men can lie, but few can lie consistently. It is well to remember that one's question may be repeated to a police official, and according to the manner of their phrasing may either enlighten or mystify the authorities.

Valuable information may often be obtained by volunteering certain news oneself in the course of a conversation, and following it up with a veiled conversation. For instance, under the pretence of comparing the new English light howitzer with our weapon of the same type, the officer may explain something about the breach system of the one which is familiar, and thus endeavour to coax information about the sights of the others. It is generally better to ascertain half-a-dozen facts than to elicit a hundred opinions. A stupid informer's opinion is of no value and a clever one's will probably not disclose his own views. On the other hand, a multitude of facts, even though half of them may be apparently at the time of acquirement of no value, will generally lead, on being reassembled in the section, to a fairly accurate conclusion. But, generally speaking, the higher in social position and more expert the informer the greater the caution with which his informa-

tion must be received. Officers who offer to sell information, with documentary confirmation of an accurate description, must be regarded as particularly dangerous people to deal with, and every precaution ought to be taken to evade their possible "fishing for information." Usually they in France belong to the Counter-Espionage Department. The section understands that a weak imitation of this department has been recently organised in London. In England it *is well to avoid making any approaches to either a Military or Naval officer. They may be regarded as incorruptible.* But if the officer has to be on guard against undue credulity he should likewise beware of hasty scepticism. It is the unexpected, in the preparation for war, that always happens. The intelligence officer in a foreign country must ever be on the alert for an unexpected stroke of genius of a potential enemy.

That the profound common sense inculcated in this rude medium of espionage was not invariably acted upon by Baron Von Eckardstein's kinsman was pretty clearly evidenced by the circumstances under which another relative of Sir John Maple's *ci-devant* son-in-law was presented with twenty-one months' gratuitous hospitality in one of King George's corrals for criminals for attempting to procure naval secrets from a Plymouth solicitor.

Secret service funds were, with reckless prodigality, in 1911 passing through the hands of a Captain of German light cavalry who had replaced Garlick at the Hamburg-Amerika offices and elsewhere. Actuated by the laudable desire to keep some of the money in his regimental, if not actual, family, Von Eckardstein's cousin recommended a brother officer, a subaltern of his squadron, for special service employment under him in England.

The thing was done, and a dashing young Lieutenant of horse is, with extreme suitability, selected to proceed on a secret mission to the country of a potential enemy to, let us say, examine into a reported shortage of mounts for the British cavalry, or, mayhap, to inquire into alterations that have come about in the minor tactics of the mounted arm through the pre-eminence which had lately been given in our cavalry to the long fire-weapon over *l'arm blanc*. Not a bit of it. This sucking Murat was,

in the way they did things in "H.M.S. Pinafore" or the "Pirates of Penzance," commissioned to spy into the question of the docking of the new 29 ft. draught Super-Dreadnoughts, the extension of the oil-fuel system in ocean-going destroyers, and a few other cogent matters, just such as any swaggering Zug leader in a Prussian Hussar regiment might be supposed to have on his finger-ends. Arrived at a great naval port and arsenal in the future enemy's country, what could be more natural than that this astute cavalry subaltern—he knew a thing or two—should at once enter into treasonable relations with a respectable, inoffensive family solicitor? This limb of the law, who knew more about Blackburn and Blackstone or Campbell and Chitty than he did about the internal mechanism of a battleship, was promised a yearly German secret service allowance of £500, rising to a cool thousand, for acting, not as a drawer-up of leases and mortgage deeds, but as a draughtsman of gun fittings, the construction of which was being kept dark—extremely dark—by the people at Whitehall. But the hussar and the attorney were going, for the benefit of Berlin, to throw light upon them. Of course, the lawyer, as a loyal citizen, communicated with an inquisitive order of mankind poetically known as myrmidons, but recognised by the vulgar as POLICE.

The whole of the facts of this remarkable case were not unveiled at the trial. At risk of disturbing the domestic felicity of the Von Eckardsteins, which does not matter to me as much as one of the Iron Duke's "tuppenny damns," let the truth be here told even if the heavens fall. When the hussar officer returned, after prolonged secret correspondence between Baron Von Eckardstein's cousin and his colleagues of the Active Service Police in Berlin, horrible to relate, no immediate job could be found for the brother officer where his knowledge of his own arm of the service might prove useful. He, however, had to be provided for, had to have a reasonable excuse for sharing in the manna that descended in a grateful shower upon the German espionage headquarters in Cockspur Street. And so he was packed off at a moment's notice to Portsmouth and Plymouth. The fiasco that followed led to the recall, in 1912, of Max Garlick's successor. And he was the last of London's German Polizeiraths.

# The Use and Abuse of Ambassadors

By A. Maurice Low

One of the rare bits of humour that has come out of the tragedy of this war is the remark alleged to have been put in the mouth of the German Emperor, who, represented as dictating the terms of peace, insists that the diplomatic service of Germany shall be taken over by England, so disastrous has been the work of his own professional diplomatists.

Prejudice or preference apart, most of us, I think, will agree that diplomacy has cut a rather sorry figure. It is one of those curious things that life in ironical mood is always offering to confound our fine wire-drawn theories, that the only diplomatists who have gained any credit during the past year have been not the precisely trained professionals of the European services, but the amateurs of the United States; and this the present writer can say without being accused of seeing in every American goose a swan, because, as an Englishman, he may be supposed to have a slight preference in favour of his own country and the advantage of detachment.

Modern diplomacy is an attempt to engraft archaic traditions and the practices of the Middle Ages on the thoughts and customs of to-day, with results that are bound to be disastrous. European diplomacy is about as logical and rational, and therefore as futile, as if the doctor with his scientific training were to treat appendicitis with the decoction of herbs and the mascerated viscera of toads that was the *materia medica* of the chirurgeon barber. The effect would be a hopeless hodge-podge of empiricism and science, an uncertainty as to results, and a heavy mortality. Modern diplomacy is almost as inexact and nearly as fatal.

The Ambassador is a survival. When statesmanship was craft or strength, an Ambassador had a purpose. He

was an imperfect instrument, he often did more harm than good—just as the barber's lancet killed more frequently than it cured—and both were alike in believing that the remedy for all ills was blood-letting; the Ambassador because, as Machiavelli held, one ought never allow a disorder to take place to avoid war; the barber because a disorder stubborn enough to resist the viscera of frogs had to be drained out through the blood. Then an Ambassador acted almost entirely without instructions and on his own initiative. To-day he may do nothing without explicit orders.

When an Ambassador was sent to persuade royalty, for reasons of state, to marry a lady with a hump, or with the face of a saint and the temper of the devil, or was delegated to negotiate a treaty with his Majesty of Spain to the detriment of his well-beloved cousin and fellow monarch of France, and could be induced by the latter's Ambassador to see there was more to be made by an alliance with France than with Spain, an Ambassador was all-important.

In that day craft and graft were the chief weapons in the ambassadorial armoury, and an envoy was not only expected to use them, but it was on the skill he displayed in the employment of his weapons that his success depended. He did business—and I use the word in its precise meaning—with a few persons—a Minister, the king's mistress, his father confessor, his relatives, male and female—and he did it on a strictly business basis. He bought and paid in cash when money alone could corrupt or convert, he made love when less sordid considerations would prevail—it was the mother of the Empress Catherine II. who wrote to Frederick of Prussia advising him to replace his elderly Ambassador with a handsome young man with a good complexion—he bargained or intrigued as the occasion demanded. Everyone remembers Sir Henry Wotton's classic dictum: "An Ambassador is an honest man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country"; and Ambassadors of his time were well schooled in that belief. An Ambassador, Paschalius declared, ought to study to speak the truth, but he gave him a loophole by affirming he was not such a "rustic boor" as to say that an "official lie" is never to be employed or to deny that an Ambassador should not be, on occasion, *splendide*

*mendax*. More concisely was the advice of a seventeenth-century commentator, who held that whatever the religion of an Ambassador, it was his duty to invent falsehoods and to go about making society believe them.

Our modern diplomatist is supposed to be a man of the world with various accomplishments, but they are insignicant compared with the wide knowledge, versatility, and great experience required of their predecessors. The learned Venetian Ottaviano Maggi gives this picture of the ideal diplomatist of the sixteenth century:

"He must not only be a good Christian, but a learned theologian; he must be a philosopher, well versed in Aristotle and Plato, and able at a moment's notice to solve in correct dialectical form the most abstruse problems; he must be well read in the classics, and an expert in mathematics, architecture, music, physics, and civil and canon law. He must not only know how to speak and write Latin with classical refinement, but he must be a master of Greek, Spanish, French, German, and Turkish. He must have a sound knowledge of history, geography, and the science of war; but at the same time he is not to neglect the poets, and never to be without his Homer"; and in addition he must be "well born, rich, and of handsome presence."

There were excellent reasons three or four hundred years ago why an Ambassador must be an Admirable Crichton, a man of great learning and versed in all the polite arts. The Ambassador not only had it in his power to bring on war, but he was the medium of communication between Court and Court and not between peoples. Travel was slow, uncertain, and hazardous. One of the Popes dismissed an English Ambassador with a string of beads and the equivocal remark: "If we must lose him I hope he will take care of his health on the road." There were no cables and no mails. Instructions were sent by courier, who risked his life every time he set out on his long journey.

The Ambassador was a man of great consequence, and had to be treated with all the deference due to his rank and station; he was almost invariably a great nobleman, a tremendous stickler for etiquette, jealous of the smallest preference shown a rival. They were always wrangling,

these stately Ambassadors, like a pack of unmannerly schoolboys. When the Earls of Holland and Carlisle went to Paris to arrange the marriage of Charles and Henrietta and form a league, they first demanded to know how Cardinal Richelieu would receive them, whether he would show them more honour than the Ambassador of the King of Spain. There being some difficulties in the way, the crafty Englishmen proposed that the Cardinal should pretend to be ill and take to his bed, and it was at his bedside that these great questions of state were discussed. No wonder the Master of the Ceremonies was the hardest-worked official at Court and "exhausted all the faculties of his soul on the equiponderance of the first place of inferior degree with the last of a superior."

Volumes might be written on the long negotiations that went on over the question of precedence, who was to pay the first visit, where his Excellency or Magnificency was to sit. In England a Privy Council was hastily summoned to ascertain why the French Ambassador had "a defluction of rheum in his teeth, beside a fit of the ague." His Excellency of France had been invited to a festival, which had to be postponed until his absence could be satisfactorily explained.

On one occasion at the English Court the French and Spanish Ambassadors quarrelled over their precedence, both claiming to sit at the right hand of the Pope's Legate. As neither would yield, the resourceful Master of Ceremonies sent to France for the Pope's Nuncio, who was given the place of honour. There was a Russian Ambassador, in the day when Russian Ambassadors were a novelty in England, who complained that only one lord-in-waiting met him at the head of the stairs at Whitehall, while no one had attended him in the courtyard. The ever-ready Master of Ceremonies—who, in addition to his other accomplishments, had to be a quick and convincing liar—gravely assured him "that in England it was considered a higher honour to be received by one lord rather than two."

All this sounds supremely ridiculous, but no more ridiculous than petty when we are told that Ambassadors were given presents of gold plate and other costly articles when they concluded their mission, and always contrived

to make their offerings to the Court officials as small as possible. Thus Sir John Finett, Master of the Ceremonies to Charles I., bitterly complained that when a Spanish Ambassador departed, "his present to me at his parting from Dover being an old gilt livery pot, that has lost his fellow, not worth above twelve pounds, accompanied with two pairs of Spanish gloves to make it almost thirteen, to my shame and his."

But is the ambassadorial fiction any more ridiculous to-day than it was 500 years ago? The fiction of modern diplomacy, its *raison d'être*, its only justification, is that an Ambassador cultivates good relations between nations, which is the cake given to that big and foolish child, the public, to keep it quiet; but the real reason for the maintenance of a diplomatic service is to enable every nation to try to gain an advantage over the others, or, if an advantage cannot be gained, at least for each nation to know the intrigues of every other and to circumvent them.

Let the present war prove the falsity of both the public and secret reasons.

Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, telegraphing to Sir Edward Grey on August 1st, reports a conversation with M. Sazonoff, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said:

"Germany was unfortunate in her representatives in Vienna and St. Petersburg; the former was a violent Russophobe who had urged Austria on, the latter had reported to his Government that Russia would never go to war."

On the same day Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the British Ambassador at Vienna, telegraphing to Sir Edward Grey, reports a conversation with the Russian Ambassador: "I agree with His Excellency that the German Ambassador at Vienna desired war from the first, and that his strong personal bias probably coloured his action here."

Thus the Ambassadors of Germany and Austria not only did not promote friendly relations between their countries and those to which they were accredited, but helped to bring on the war.

The Ambassador, then, as the promoter of good relations, is seen to be valueless; how much more valuable is the service he renders his Government by keeping it

informed of what other Governments are doing? Here, again, the present war exhibits diplomacy incompetent.

Twenty-five days elapsed between the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. The Austro-German diplomatic history of those twenty-five days has not yet been published, but Germany admits in her White Book the two Governments were in consultation. Yet not an Ambassador, outside of those of Austria and Germany, knew what was going on; at least, there is no indication of it in the various and variegated books which every Government has issued. Germany and Austria spent nearly a month in secret conference, but the entire diplomatic world was kept in superb ignorance; the Ambassadors of some of the Great Powers had left their posts and were enjoying a holiday. Diplomacy, in the habit it has, carelessly played while the witches' cauldron was brewing.

The German Ambassador in St. Petersburg so little understood the psychology of the people whose psychology it was his business to know, and was so little able to read the mind of the governing class of Russia, that he reported to his Government Russia would not fight, in this being matched by Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador in London, who was quite convinced England would not go to war, because she would have to put down civil war in Ireland, revealing his ignorance of human nature in general, and particularly the psychology of the British people. Perhaps not Macaulay's schoolboy, but certainly any Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate could have told him that a nation forgets its differences when threatened by a foreign foe; that the English and Irish delight in fighting each other, but they resent the impertinent interference of outsiders. The German Ambassador ought to have remembered the classic story of the settlement worker in the East End of London, new to his job, who went to the rescue of an Irish woman, the victim of her drunken English husband, and for his pains was sent staggering by a blow from the lady's fist accompanied by the remark: "I'll teach the likes of you to come meddling between man and wife."

As a matter of fact, an Ambassador rarely knows more of what is going on about him than anyone else; there is

every reason why he is all too frequently in the dark. The diplomat is so hedged about by archaic traditions and ridiculous conventions that instead of having a broad view of the country, which is the popular belief, his view is always circumscribed. The polite fiction prevails that the diplomat, metaphorically, looks at life from an aeroplane, with the rivers and vales and high mountains of intrigue and sentiment and national feeling spread out before his discerning *eyes*; the truth is, he looks at life with *one* eye glued to a knot hole, and all he sees is the little corner that is brought under his vision.

I have known some extraordinarily able diplomats, men of rare discernment and sound judgment, with intuitive knowledge and an instinct almost uncanny for understanding the politics and mind of a foreign people, but these men were remarkable in spite of and not because they were diplomats. In the European diplomatic services, for the first twenty years or so after a man enters the corps, he is permitted no initiative. Nothing can be worse than this—the stifling of initiative and the treadmill of routine when a man comes fresh, ambitious, and virile to his life's work. It softens character, not moral, but mental; for a man in his plastic age to be forced to lean on someone is as weakening to his intellect as it is to his muscles if he never gives them play. Under the high-sounding name of *attachés* and secretaries the budding diplomat is merely a clerk. He transcribes and briefs and dockets, according to rules and regulations duly made and provided, including the precise margin on the left-hand side and at top and bottom; he uses the exact words ordained by custom. Innovation is frowned at, for above everything else diplomacy is conservatism, and displays a deep-rooted objection to the slightest variance from precedent.

There is nothing mysterious about diplomacy, nothing except its rather pitiful attempts to be mysterious. Diplomacy may require a greater intellectual equipment than the compounding of pills, but the compounder of pills is as jealous of his traditions as the diplomat, and both know that the public values most what it understands least. *Aqua q. s.* on a prescription is more impressive than the vernacular, and *aqua*, to the untutored mind,

comes out of a bottle with a label and must not be handled by vulgar hands lest deadly consequences result, and it is costly, while water is common property and costless. Diplomacy trades on the same fiction and delights in the same theatricalism.

One reason diplomacy is at disadvantage and Ambassadors so frequently are ignorant of current affairs is that they live and move in a very narrow circle, and, like royalty, are told only what is pleasant. The most gigantic illusion to which practical men still cling in a practical age is the childish delusion that an Ambassador hears the truth. He does, but only when it is unimportant. Diplomacy knows, because it is the principle on which all diplomacy rests, that diplomacy is never unpolite unless it purposely means to be rude, and when that happens the diplomat gives way to the soldier. But until the band begins to play and the shells shriek, diplomacy is cautious evasion, and the truth is handled with an economy that no housekeeper's league trying to make a record could hope to emulate.

The German Chancellor and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs did not take the British, French, or Russian Governments into their confidence while they were deciding, as they believed, the fate of Serbia. Even Italy, their ally, was kept in ignorance. Diplomacy prides itself on its secrecy, detests publicity, and looks with scorn upon the man whose weakness is volubility, and yet diplomacy has a fatalistic conviction that nations deal frankly one with the other. One has only to read the memoirs and diaries and letters of Foreign Ministers and Secretaries of State, published when the incidents with which they deal are so far in the past that they have become history, to see that while they were corresponding with foreign Ambassadors and conveying to them the "renewed assurances of their distinguished consideration," or expressing profound conviction that the Ambassador's Government is solely animated by those high ideals and humane sentiments for which his country has always been so conspicuously a champion, opinions in quite another form have been expressed by the Secretary to his own Ambassador. A Secretary of State is always on his guard when dealing with an Ambassador; of course, I refer to great questions of state, the

questions which may lead to war or cause a severance of friendly relations. Minor questions can be easily disposed of, but to employ an Ambassador on trivialities is as great a waste of energy as to use a steam hammer to crack walnuts. It can be done, of course, but there are cheaper and less ponderous ways.

Anglo-American relations in recent years have twice strikingly revealed the ineffectiveness of an Ambassador. Despite our little family differences, there are no people who see eye to eye as Americans and Englishmen. Seldom has an Ambassador been so cordially liked or held in such high esteem as the late Lord Pauncefote or Viscount Bryce, both of whom not only were the friends of America, but thoroughly understood the American character. Yet Lord Pauncefote was unable to secure the ratification of the arbitration treaty negotiated with Secretary Olney, which he regarded as the most important negotiation of his career. Mr. Bryce (as he then was), honoured by the United States as a foreigner rarely has been, looked upon, as Americans were fond of saying, "as one of us," because of his intimate knowledge of and sympathy with the United States, could not prevent the passage of the Panama Canal Act, which, in the opinion of his Government, violated the terms of the canal treaty and greatly irritated England. Parenthetically it may be remarked neither man was a professionl diplomatist, and Washington was their first diplomatic appointments. Lord Pauncefote's training was legal; Viscount Bryce was a historian, Member of Parliament, and member of the Cabinet.

I cite these two cases because they so impressively illustrate how little an Ambassador can accomplish. If Lord Pauncefote and Viscount Bryce failed, could any other Ambassador hope to succeed? Both men failed, not because the American people distrusted or disliked them—the American people not only trusted them, but liked them—but because they attempted to do what public opinion would not sanction. And that—public opinion—is the new force that has made diplomacy, clinging to the stage in an age of electricity, impotent.

When sovereigns negotiated treaties without having to consult parliaments or senates, a king could do what he pleased, and if an Ambassador was clever enough to

win the favour of the king the trick was turned. Now even more important than king or president is the humble and unknown individual out of which public opinion is formed. This atom, which is the driving force behind Governments, which wrecks them in petulant mood and makes them in a fit of enthusiasm, which frequently is unreasonable and sometimes reasons without knowledge, is uninfluenced by the personality of the Ambassador, and remains cold to his charms. It is a remark often heard that one Ambassador is popular and another unpopular, which means that among a very small number of people, usually composed of officials, members of the Court in monarchical countries and people of wealth in Republics, who constitute what is known as "society," one man is better liked than another; but to the great mass of the people he is neither liked nor disliked, because they know nothing about him. He is simply a name.

An Ambassador can do a great deal of harm, but I seriously question whether he is able to do much good. If he is tactless, if he dislikes the people to whom he is sent, if he is foolish enough to show his dislike and express his opinions—and there have been diplomats guilty of these indiscretions—he will naturally antagonise the persons with whom he is brought in intimate contact, the official and social world, and a prejudice will be created that will slowly spread through larger circles, and the impression will be created that the country he represents is unfriendly; but let him be ever so popular in the capital, and his popularity will have no influence with the country at large. The greatest mischief Ambassadors can do, which they constantly do, is to mislead their Governments, not deliberately, but because their judgment is bad or they are ruled by their prejudices, as was done by the German Ambassadors in St. Petersburg or London; or they are ambitious to make a reputation as great diplomatists.

It may be accepted as an axiom that the less a diplomat has to do with diplomacy, the better off, as a rule, his country will be.

The Government must rely for information upon its diplomatic agent—it is the only source of information it possesses—and it is a fiction sedulously fostered by the official mind in all countries that an official always knows

more than a person without official standing. The mere ceremony of creating an Ambassador is magical and endows him with wisdom. An Ambassador who comes to a country for the first time, who knows little of its history or laws, and less of the mind of its people, who is in every respect a stranger, is deemed competent to advise his foreign office, to interpret the curiously complicated and involved cross-currents of national sentiment. Foreign Ministers usually know no more of foreign countries than the average person who spends his holidays in travel and obtains a superficial and utterly misleading idea of the foreign mind. Is it any wonder that when a blind Foreign Minister is led by a blind Ambassador there should be confusion?

While criticism is salutary, a remedy for an evil complained of is more valuable. Having expressed my belief that in this day and generation Ambassadors are frequently useless and often dangerous to the peace and goodwill of nations, I may be permitted to suggest the corrective.

Consuls, because they promote trade, are extremely valuable. The consular corps should be largely increased and its efficiency raised. There now exists a sharp division between the consular and diplomatic corps, which is purely social. A consul may or may not be a gentleman; a diplomat is supposed to be that intangible thing, a gentleman. Under the new dispensation a consul would always be a gentleman; it would be as much a prerequisite for appointment as his ability to speak the language of the country to which he is appointed.

Consuls should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the political conditions of the country. It is not to be supposed that they will take part in politics, that they will lend themselves to intrigue or have a preference for any party leaders. Emphatically not. They will always be strictly neutral and give no expression to their political beliefs; but that will not prevent them from being close observers and confidentially communicating the results of their observations to their own Governments. This is now done to a limited extent, but as the functions of a consul are purely commercial, he is not encouraged to do systematically and with intelligent understanding work that would be of the highest importance. It is the embassy

and not the consulate that is now the source of political information.

The meaning of every great movement, social, economic, religious, the consul ought to know; he should be a discriminating judge of the real feeling of the people for or against his own people and Government and be able to determine why this prejudice exists. This information he can derive at first hand, as he will have a large and varied acquaintance, which is an advantage he will possess over the Ambassador, whose position prevents him going outside of a certain circle for his friends. A consul can without loss of dignity know everyone.

The Ambassador would be superseded by a Chief Consul, which, of course, would be a horrible come-down for the Ambassador, and is such a shockingly radical suggestion that it may be expected to be dismissed with a wave of the hand. But there is nothing sacred about an Ambassador or the gold lace and frippery of diplomacy. It is all purely artificial. A hundred years ago the representatives of the Great Powers met and solemnly decided the rights and privileges to be accorded to an Ambassador, a Nuncio, a Legate, a Minister, and so down the scale, and it is because these eminent statesmen sat round a table in Vienna in the last century that we of the present century have to suffer.

There is no more reason why an Ambassador should be styled an Ambassador than he should be called a High Mightiness or a Chief Consul; there is excellent reason why, in the age of the typewriter, we should chafe at the obsolete methods of the quill pen. What was perhaps useful in 1815 is absurd in 1915.

The Chief Consul, nominally residing in the capital, would spend much of his time in travelling and coming in personal contact with his consuls and his people. How much does an Ambassador know of the United States or its people who lives in Washington, pays occasional visits to New York, and spends the summer at Newport or some other fashionable resort, always meeting the same persons and moving in the same social set? How much can the German Ambassador know of France and her people whose knowledge is confined to Paris? Washington is not the United States any more than Paris is France.

The Chief Consul would still be his Government's agent to transact diplomatic negotiations, only we should drop high-sounding words and call things by their proper names. An Ambassador is never permitted to sign a treaty, no matter how trivial, until it has been carefully considered by the home Government and passed upon by the Secretary of State's legal advisers and technical experts, and when political questions or commercial interests are affected he is always given professional assistance. The same system would be continued. The Chief Consul would hold the national power of attorney, which the Ambassador now possesses under the grandiloquent "full powers," his authority to sign a treaty, but, like any other agent, he is subject to the orders of his principal. A treaty sounds imposing and is invested with a good deal of formality, but when you remember that the treaty may be nothing more than a simple agreement dealing with the disposition of the property of aliens dying intestate, and that every day hundreds of attorneys, without any fuss or feathers, draw up contracts much more complicated, the practical mind questions whether diplomacy is beyond the grasp of the average man.

Surely the judgment and opinions of fifty intelligent consuls, coming in contact with all classes and meeting all kinds and conditions of men, must be more valuable to a Government than the opinion of a single man, even if he is called an Ambassador and is supposed to be sacrosanct because he is the fictional personal representative of royalty or the President of the Republic. And if the Chief Consul is a man of super-intelligence, as he ought to be, appointed not because he is a favourite of royalty or commands political influence, but because he is the one man in a thousand, surely that man at the head of his consular corps would be worth more to his Government and country than one Ambassador of mediocre abilities.

Washington, *October*, 1915.

# The Press Censorship

## By Libra

WHEN the war is over no one will be the least interested in the Press Bureau, what it did, what it was unable to do, or the curious conditions under which it worked. Just at present it is, and for months past has been, useful as a sort of Aunt Sally at which any one could, without payment, throw a stick with the certain knowledge that the lady was forbidden by the rules to defend herself and had not a friend in the world to take her part.

This is not the place nor the time to write a history of the Press Bureau. The war still continues, and when, after another twelve or eighteen months that moment arrives, the public interest in this freak will not survive its disappearance.

The violent and long-sustained attacks of a section of the Press, of most war and foreign correspondents, of all military and naval critics, of some members of the Lords and Commons, and of a large number of the general public raised in my mind a certain curiosity and a desire to ascertain the facts in regard to this much-abused institution. The published criticisms of the office were so remarkable, so divergent, and evidently so ill-informed that I thought it was worth a little trouble to arrive at the truth. There is no difficulty in getting at the facts, the quest is easy; there are no ogres in that part of the Royal United Service Institute in Whitehall which is the temporary home of the official Press Bureau, and, if you apply there for information, you will be received with courtesy and every legitimate question will be answered. Only the work of the office is done at high pressure, the formula "Wait and see" is not in use; the unexpected is always happening and must always be dealt with instantly, so it will take a number of visits, and reasonable tact in the prosecution of inquiries, if a thorough knowledge of the working of the Press Censorship is to be gained. Having regard to the debates in both Houses of Parliament, the

letters to the *Times* and other papers, the leading articles and paragraphs in almost every news-sheet in the country, it seems obvious that none of these speakers or writers has taken the trouble to seek for exact information about the Press Bureau at the fountain-head.

To the January number of THE ENGLISH REVIEW Mr. Alexander Campbell contributed a short article, the burden of which is that the censorship "has become a grave menace to the successful prosecution of the war." This article, while ill-informed and out of date, can hardly be taken seriously. The writer complains of the interference of the censors, and a few sentences later asks why the "Military expert" is allowed to serve up "the most amazing nonsense in the guise of truth." He calls for a free hand for newspaper editors, and his sovereign remedy for the lamentable state of affairs which he describes is contained in the following sentence: The cure is to be effected "by an organisation of journalists which would censor news released for publication and destroy all of suspect veracity. All the vapid nonsense, the inane and the false, would be thrown overboard."

Mr. Campbell evidently believes that the tyranny of the censors is not limited to their actions in Whitehall, but that when they have "passed for publication" the "vapid nonsense" and the "periodical cackle" of the military experts, or "the dreary stream of lies from Copenhagen and Amsterdam," their malign influence is so great that they compel the bullied editor—who has supplied the "cackle, or to whom the "dreary stream of lies" is addressed—to print it in his journal. Or does Mr. Campbell wish your readers to understand that it is the Press Censors in Whitehall who are the military experts and themselves write this "vapid nonsense," and that they, from time to time, run over to Holland and thence dispatch "the dreary stream of lies" to the *Times* or the *Daily Chronicle?*

When I read these amazing suggestions I wondered whether Mr. Campbell had ever heard of a sinister report, very early in the war, when the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders was described by a trusted correspondent as—well, let us say scattered—or of another picturesque tale, a few months later, when another corre-

spondent told how "every motor-car in Northern France had been commandeered" to help pursue the fleeing German armies.

Even as I write the King has appointed Lord Chelmsford to be his Viceroy in India, and with that announcement dies a newspaper report most positively asserted and most persistenly propagated. When Lord Kitchener left England to visit the Eastern Mediterranean Command a very influential American newspaper, the *Philadelphia Ledger*, published an article condemning the British Press Censorship in unmeasured terms. To point the moral and adorn the tale, this American paper quoted a statement, by the Associated Press of America, to the effect that Lord Kitchener had left England for India to deal with a serious revolt in that great Dependency, and suggested that, while this was the true explanation of his hurried departure, the Press Bureau had suppressed the facts and was trying to make the world believe that the Secretary of State for War was merely going on a tour of inspection which would not extend beyond Egypt.

Lord Ribblesdale, speaking in the House of Lords, disclosed a military secret of the first importance, and while every newspaper in the country condemned that amazing indiscretion, they all published the statement, and so gave currency to a disclosure which, without the help of the Press, need not have passed beyond the gilded chamber where it was uttered.

In the face of these instances, which might be multiplied by the thousand, what does Mr. Campbell mean by demanding a free hand for editors and "an organisation of journalists" to censor the Censor?

Mr. Campbell's article suggests one other reflection. He would have "an organisation of journalists which would censor news released for publication, and destroy all of suspect veracity." If the "organisation of journalists" could do this better than, say, the staff of the *Times*, one may still doubt whether they could always determine accurately the veracity of a message from Amsterdam, from Copenhagen, or from Athens, and, if everything that was "suspect" was to be suppressed, might there not sometimes be difficulty in filling the columns of some of the most widely read newspapers?

The other day the Minister concerned was asked in the House of Commons whether a pamphlet, charging the British censorship with being pro-German, had been submitted to the Press Bureau before publication, and whether, in consequence of that and other charges, it was intended to change the policy, methods, or *personnel* of the Press Censorship.

This pamphlet is entitled "The British Censorship: an examination of the Institution and of the general position of American correspondents in London, from the point of view of one of their number."

A sub-heading states that the pamphlet contains "An address before the American Luncheon Club, Savoy Hotel, London, November 19th, 1915, by Edward Price Bell, London correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*."

This address is, in some measure, a serious attack on the Official Press Bureau of this country, and, as such, it is of public interest to examine it and deal with its assertions and criticisms, the more so because the attack comes from the friendly representative of a great American newspaper, though it would not be fair to assume that he expresses the unanimous opinion of representatives of the American Press in London, or that of the American people in general.

In the case of this pamphlet there seems to be equally little doubt that the writer has not informed himself of the facts; but, annoyed by the difficulties which censorship has imposed upon his work as a newspaper correspondent, he quite naturally desires to make an end of them, and, like a man surrounded in the dark, he hits out and the blows often fall on those who are really trying to help him.

Mr. Campbell declared that the censorship—meaning the Press Censorship—"had become a grave menace to the successful prosecution of the war," and Mr. Bell, in his address to the American Luncheon Club, was moved to denounce the Press Bureau because of the injury it is doing to the British cause, to British interests, and British prestige in every part of the world. He believes that the censorship "has been a calamitous libel upon the British nation"; has made it appear indifferent, poor in patriotism, supine and craven, when it is none of these things. That is a tolerably comprehensive indictment, and the reader

expects to find chapter and verse to prove the charge. In that expectation he will be disappointed, for instead of any proof at all the lecturer contents himself with saying that he *believes* there is, somewhere in London, documentary evidence—a great deal of it—to show that the censorship may justly be described as—

| | |
|---|---|
| Chaotic; | In effect, Anti-British; |
| Political; | In effect, Pro-German; |
| Discriminatory; | Ludicrous; |
| Destructive; | Incompetent; |
| Unchivalrous; | Incredible; |

Impertinent.

As no effort is made to prove the general or particular charges they must be regarded as the expression of one man's opinion, and when the speaker says that he fancies most, if not all, of his epithets would pass unchallenged by the bulk of observers in the United Kingdom, that statement also lacks support.

When Mr. Bell adds that this is particularly the case with those who know the censorship best, one may fairly ask who these well-informed people are, and add, as an undoubted fact, that no one in England possesses reliable knowledge of the Press Censorship except those who are or have been in the office, or who have deliberately tried to learn the facts at the source. If any one doubts this statement, let him produce the best-informed man he knows to submit himself for examination on the policy, practice, and history of the Press Bureau. It may be conceded at once that the censorship is "destructive," and, so far as the word "incompetent" means fallible, that also would be accepted. There happens, however, to be on record the opinion of a very well-qualified personage in regard to the British Press Censorship. Count Bernstorff, in a copy of a letter addressed to the American Secretary of State, which was entrusted to Mr. Archibald—not for publication, but for safe delivery to the authorities in Berlin—expressed what may be accepted as the Ambassador's very real views in regard to the British Press Bureau. He described it as "a Press Bureau that in its efficiency and imaginative power has never had its equal in the history of the world."

That opinion sounds extravagant, but, coming from an enemy in the position of the German Ambassador at Washington, should be more convincing to any fair mind than an unreasoning attack from one whose personal activities have been hampered by the restrictions which the Government of a belligerent has felt it necessary to impose upon neutral correspondents, as well as upon its own Press, for the safety of its people and the success of its arms.

As to the slaughtering of innocent words for the *Chicago Daily News*, which the representative of that paper in London says the censorship had no right to kill, it should not be necessary to remind any neutral newspaper correspondent that on the outbreak of war the British Government issued a notification of suspension of telegraph and radio-telegraph services throughout the Empire. The notification says: "With a view to minimise inconvenience to the public His Britannic Majesty's Government will, until further notice, and as an act of grace, permit the transmission of such telegrams and radio-telegrams in plain language as foreign Governments or the public choose to send, provided that such telegrams and radio-telegrams are written in English or French, and on the understanding that they are accepted at the sender's risk and subject to censorship by the British authorities; that is, that they may be stopped, delayed, or otherwise dealt with in all respects at the discretion of those authorities and without notice to the senders; and that no claims in respect of them, whether for the reimbursement of the sums paid for transmission or otherwise, will be considered by His Majesty's Government in any circumstances whatever."

That is a complete answer to the question, "What right had it," *i.e.*, the Press Bureau, "to lay destructive hands on this property?" Property is usually something of which the owner has possession, but in this case those concerned were fully warned of the conditions under which alone news might be transmitted, and the so-called property never reached the destination for which it was intended because it had to pass through a belligerent country, which happened to be in a position to stop it, as being useful to the enemy if it were published in America. Mr. Bell also assumed that messages from foreign countries to America

must have been censored in those countries before they reached London and that it is monstrous for an English censor, in those circumstances, to lay a violent pencil on this "property" in transit.

Apart from the fact that by the declaration already quoted the English Censor has complete justification for his action, and American newspapers to which such messages are addressed should count as gain everything that is passed to them, it is obvious that many messages have been dispatched from Allied countries by pressmen who have succeeded in evading censorship, or the censorship itself has been lax.

Then, again, messages from neutral countries—say, Scandinavia, Holland, or Switzerland—are probably subject to no censorship there, and yet hundreds of them are sent by pro-Germans in the hope that they will be published in America, and, if possible, in Great Britain and her Colonies, in the interests of Germany.

It is certainly astonishing to find a journalist, at this time of day, asking why messages emanating from Germany should be "mutilated" in transit to America. The reason is because so-called neutral correspondents in Germany often appear to be more German in feeling than the Germans themselves, and they send reports which, when not absolutely untrue, are intended to magnify German victories, to preach the doctrine of German all-powerfulness, to depreciate this country and her Allies, and to do everything that is possible to influence Germans throughout the world, and neutrals wherever they may be found, to sympathise with Germany and her allies, to push her propaganda, advance her cause, vilify England and our Allies, and to stir up hatred against us in every corner of the globe where it seems possible to embarrass us. That is why messages from American correspondents in Germany, in Constantinople, in Vienna, in Sofia and other places are sometimes censored, and if American opinion is, for that cause, influenced unfavourably to the Allies, it is the lesser of two possible evils and one which we should not fear if those whose duty it is to inform the American public made the facts plain.

Later on in his address Mr. Bell returns to ten of the eleven special indictments against the Press Censorship,

and, omitting "impertinent," he proceeds to say why, in each case, he makes the charge, but in only one does he state the grounds on which the charge is founded. That case is well known; a writer introduced into a description of a review at the Front some words from Kipling's "Recessional." The words were printed as part of the text, without quotation marks or anything to show that they were lines of verse. No one has attempted to defend the censor's action, but if this case is the worst accusation which can be established against the Press Bureau, that office can afford to accept the responsibility with resignation. There is, however, one other charge which deserves a word of reply; it is the charge of "discrimination," both as "between correspondents and between newspapers," and that must be taken to mean American correspondents and American newspapers. My inquiries convince me that if there is one principle more than any other which the Press Bureau has tried to observe it is impartiality, and I feel sure that Mr. Bell would not have made this charge if he knew all the facts. An office which employs fifty censors, working day and night, and dealing often with an enormous quantity of Press matter, may have the firmest principles and the strictest rules, and yet, once in a way, a not too scrupulous pressman may succeed in defeating a censor. Indeed, it is not really necessary for the pressman to do more than to send in something which he knows perfectly well is forbidden, and, if he finds a tired or careless censor who passes it, at 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. amid a crowd of other messages, the thing is done. When that happens, as it has happened on some few occasions, it is a perversion of terms, or a misrepresentation of facts, to call such an oversight discrimination between correspondents and between newspapers. The "unchivalrous" charge emanated from a great newspaper; it has been dealt with completely in the House of Commons, disproved completely, protested against most energetically by the correspondent on whose behalf it was supposed to have been made, and to repeat it again is surely disingenuous. What the public knows nothing of, and the Press decline to recognise after seventeen months of war, is that "the censorship" is referred to daily by all and sundry, from Cabinet Ministers to newspaper reporters, with an ignorance which is certainly not sublime, but is often very mis-

chievous. There is a censorship of commercial and private telegrams, under the control of the War Office, at the Central Telegraph Office in London. There is a censorship of private letters, in Kingsway. There is a Press Bureau, in Whitehall, which deals with all Press cables, Press articles, and Press pictures, and issues to the Press such information as is sent to it for that purpose by the Admiralty, the War Office, the Foreign Office, and the other great departments of State. Beyond these three censoring offices, which have nothing in common and nothing whatever to do with each other, there is, at the Headquarters of the British Army in every theatre of war, one or more military censors whose business it is to censor all the Press communications from special correspondents at the Front. These officers are, of course, under military control; they are guided by military rules and considerations, and they have nothing to do with the Press Bureau in Whitehall. If these military censors delete words and passages from the messages of special correspondents, they have, no doubt, excellent reasons for their action, and the critic of the Press Bureau would be surprised to find that, at Headquarters, they have quite convincing reasons for not allowing the publication in the British Press of a German version of a general or minor action. It is enough to say that a statement is often hazarded in the hope that it will be confirmed on British authority; whether true or false, it is often of the greatest importance to the enemy to have it confirmed or denied. It is the fashion for some English journals and some neutral correspondents, who are our guests, to abuse British censorship in all its phases, but it should not be forgotten that Germany, which is so often held up for admiration and imitation, does none of the obliging things which are demanded here by those to whom the war is only an interesting topic for newspaper articles and paragraphs. Mr. Bell, like many other people, says: "What is the use of trying to stop, on their way to America, statements which must eventually reach America?" The reply is that a delay of at least seven days is secured, and what may be highly dangerous to-day is often harmless a week later. It is also fair to ask why we should be expected to help to disseminate every German lie and possibly give it the *cachet* of publication in the British Press as well.

As regards Mr. Bell's remarks on the administration

of the Press Bureau, I find that beyond the fact that, before Sir Frederick Smith left the office he was arranging for the cable censors to be moved from the Central Telegraph office to the Press Bureau, and that the exchange was completed and organised under Lord Buckmaster, there has been no change in any principle or any practice of the Press Bureau from August, 1914, until the present time. The office has, from the beginning, been responsible for the censorship of Press matter, *so far as the newspapers chose to submit it.* It has been responsible for the censorship of all Press cables and telegraphic messages ever since October, 1914. It has acted on the instructions of the great departments from the first days of the war and does so still; and it has passed on to the Press immediately, and still passes on, all such information and reports as are sent to it by Government Departments for that purpose. To say that the central authority of the Press Bureau has, at any period of its existence, "seemed to dissolve," is ridiculous. The office grew, like Topsy; no *Deus ex machinâ* sat down and evolved it out of his inner consciousness. It continues to grow, and the stages of its life are punctuated by the various pamphlets of instructions which have, from time to time, been issued to the Press for their information and guidance. The foundation on which the structure, such as it is, has been built is the Regulations under the Defence of the Realm Act, and in the course of the last seventeen months many things have been added unto them; but there has been no change in the principles or practice of the office; only the administration is a little better organised, the records better kept, the machine works more smoothly.

The reader will understand that Mr. Bell's "address," or pamphlet, is a criticism of the Press Censorship in Whitehall, and that is all that I am concerned with in this article; but, towards the close, he wanders into much wider fields, where the criticism seems to be directed against the British Government. There I do not propose to follow him, for that is an entirely different question. As, however, there appears to be a great deal of misconception on this subject, and the term "British Government" is often employed very loosely, it may be suggested to Mr. Bell and other critics that, if they are really anxious to know the facts, they will find that the Cabinet, which alone can speak for the British Government, is not directly concerned

with the censorship. The censorship is a by-product of the war, and will cease when the war is over. The great Departments responsible for the conduct of the war, the Admiralty, the War Office, the Foreign Office, India Office, the Ministry of Munitions, and others, must necessarily decide what can safely be made public and what can not. There may be great differences of opinion as to whether those responsible for these Departments are right in their judgment or wrong; it is even conceivable that the Press censors may often differ absolutely with the instructions given to them by the Departments, but, whether that is so or not, there can be no question that those responsible for the operations know best, and their decisions must be accepted. It would not be convenient that the actual authority for a ruling should in every case be disclosed, whereas it is convenient and quite natural that the Press Bureau should bear the brunt of all criticism, not only for its own misdemeanours, but for others where it is merely *le banal instrument* of a higher authority. That is a recognised position which no sensible official would resent; but that is no excuse for indiscriminate, ill-informed, and baseless attacks.

Mr. Bell makes a special grievance of the fact that he and his friends have not been allowed to describe in detail, with journalistic colour and sensation, the various raids by German aircraft on the London neighbourhood. He is not satisfied with the official descriptions of these murderous attacks and the bare statement of the numbers of killed and injured. Well, those responsible for the defence of the country hold a different view, and when asked whether he wants privileges greater than those allowed to the British Press, he replies: "No—we want privileges equal to those which the British ought to have." He would no doubt decide what those privileges ought to be, but, while we are at war, it is probable that those who pay the piper will claim to call the tune. It is even certain that those who control the British Press do not desire to publish information useful to the enemy so that, in succeeding raids, he may correct his bearings and damage them, their friends and their property, however interesting it might be for people in America to read about it with the unconcern begotten of complete personal safety. The most harrowing descriptions of slaughtered babies could

hardly be expected to produce more than another Ford Peace Party.

Mr. Bell says: "My panacea for international ills is this: *Liberate the energies of the Press!*" It sounds quite simple, and one wonders why the British Government does not adopt it at once and so end the war; for this war is clearly an international ill. If it were not abundantly evident that Mr. Bell knows we are fighting for our existence in the greatest war the world has ever known, one might be inclined to fear that he has forgotten that rather outstanding fact. To clinch his argument and prove his case he states in a sentence the simple terms for which he asks: "To ruling Britons I would say: *Give us privileges corresponding to those which we freely, gladly, give your journalists in America, and we shall be satisfied.*" He must have forgotten the war when he wrote that.

Mr. Bell imagines the puzzled Englishman asking why his efforts are so little understood, why the world is so blind (as Mr. Bell tells him it is) to all his immeasurable sacrifices, not only for his country and his Allies, but for all humanity. The oracular reply is: "*The world cannot X-ray the opacity of your Censorship.*"

It is to be hoped that poor puzzled John Bull will go away and sin no more. The darkness of his ignorance will at last be cleared; and when, in his new-found light, he lays violent hands on the Press Censorship, and the people of America are allowed to know exactly what the German air raiders do, and how they appreciate Sir Percy Scott's efforts to welcome them, why, then the war will be won and the despised Briton will be righted in the eyes of the reading world. Only, is it not a little hard on the intelligence of the many millions, in the United States and elsewhere, to represent them as being so parlously ignorant of facts which rather jump to the eyes? Is it not just possible that those who are interested do possess a certain amount of knowledge, but that there are others who are quite indifferent, to whom a war, which is costing every day, in blood and money, a price beyond all power to count—

> "Seems but a Story told,
> Which happ'd to other folk in days of old,"

because it is not their blood or their money?

# From the French Front

By F. Tennyson Jesse

At present, in France, there exists a condition of affairs that at first glance may seem contradictory. France is at once more sharply divided and more fused in one than we are. In the former case the divisions, though clearly marked, are secondary in character—the division between those who live in the war-zone and those who live safely outside it being the most important, though even the zone itself is divided into zones 1 and 2, which make all the difference in the world to the dwellers therein. France is, even normally, the land of sharp partitions such as this—nowhere else, for instance, is a fundamental difference between the capital and the rest of the country so strongly felt. A Parisian is a thing apart from the inhabitants of any other town in France, and the whole Paris "atmosphere" and habit of thought more alien from the provinces than has ever been the case with London and her relationship to the rest of England. That these divisions are merely of a superficial nature is shown by that white-hot fusion of the whole of France—Paris and the provinces, invaded and ravaged districts as well as those safely behind any possible line of attack—which is so often miscalled the "miracle of France." It is in reality no miracle, but the inevitable result of years of stored resentment, of a hate that does not find an outlet in childishly vituperative "hymns," but is so intense as to become what it seems impossible hatred could be—a vivifying force. In some respects France was no more ready than we were, and with even less excuse, but it was her politicians and not the spirit of her own people that had failed her. Her young men had not fallen upon sloth nor her business men stretched Sunday from Friday evening till Tuesday morning. France at this moment presents to the world an aspect which, if it is not as entirely without seams as it looks from the outside, yet is most wonderfully welded. And though what seams there are become visible from

within, yet the forces which are behind the cohesion become clearer also, in a way that is not possible without intimate study in the country itself. And that is exactly what it is so hard to obtain, and rightly so. The war is a very serious thing to the French, and they resent the rush of would-be sightseers, anxious to know what war looks like, as a sick man's relations would resent strangers crowding round his bed to watch his agony. France is fighting for her life, and splendid as that may be, it entails deadly suffering which she prefers should not be stared at even by the most sympathetic of observers. Therefore, to get into France at all requires the troublous passing of many formalities, and to get into the war-zone is as hard as for a rich man to attain Paradise.

It is true that a short while ago there was a wild story floating round Paris of two women who penetrated as far as the trenches in privates' uniforms before being discovered; but methods such as these, though they may appeal to the cloak-and-dagger instinct of those who know nothing of real war, are, in the old nursery phrase, "neither clever nor funny" to those who do. They are futile and doomed to failure in the first place, and utterly selfish in the second. There can be no sympathy for childish rashness, which is bound to cause trouble and inconvenience at a time when no unnecessary jot of either should be caused to fall upon the authorities. Far from being "sporting," it is most unsporting to attempt these penny novelette methods. As to those other people with a serious and authorised mission, which they have neither the right nor the wish to jeopardise by any irregularity in the matter of passes, for them the difficulties are almost never-ending.

It is always a pity to have to introduce the personal note, yet each observer can only see through his own window, and, indeed, much of the value of impressions may come from that fact. Given that the word "I" is being used as impersonally as possible, that is all that can be attained in a personal record of things seen and learned at first hand. As to the present writer's facilities, it suffices to say that though on a special mission, and armed with very special passes, it still took some five weeks conferring with the French authorities before a permit for the war-zone was issued. They were five weeks of interest, spent in Paris and the provinces, but they were punctuated by

hitches that piled up in heartbreaking fashion considering how regulations were tightening up from day to day as one waited. Even then, the permit to a part of the war-zone on the Eastern Front obtained, I knew that, beyond getting me into the actual town named, my pass would avail me nothing. Even to leave that town to go in a tram to a suburb would require a special *sauf-conduit* from the local authorities, while for anything more I had to trust to luck and my letters of introduction. The war-zone is divided into zones 1 and 2, and to go from one to the other is a feat fraught with as many if not more difficulties than to attain the outer zone 2. The town of N——, although being shelled at the time by "380's," and though always more or less peppered by Taubes, is still only in zone 2.

* * * * *

My train took an enormous loop to avoid being shelled, and, arrived at the station before N——, I found everyone had to disembark there and proceed by tram, as the station was the objective of the shelling. The line of the damage was as direct as though drawn across the town with a giant pencil, and really many more people fled than were in the dangerous area. I could hardly get out of the train for the crowd of refugees striving to get in, but murmuring: "*à la gare comme à la gare . . .*" I fought and struggled a way out of the station and into a tramway-car for which there was much less competition, and so, with dusk, came into the shattered and silent city of N——, silent enough, except for the low rolling, now like distant thunder, now more staccato, that the people of N—— have grown so used to they take no more notice of it than to say, "Tiens! How busy they are fighting to-day!" much as one might remark that the rain seemed keeping on pretty heavily. It was a different affair, however, when the shells began falling on them, and, in spite of the marvellously low death-roll, a pretty evacuation had been the result. Still, there is nothing so quickly acquired as the shell habit, and if N—— is shelled as continuously as Rheims, which is highly improbable, the inhabitants will grow just as used to it. "Did you sleep in a cellar?" I asked a woman who had been through all the worst months at Rheims, and she replied seriously, "No, I consider it so demoralising. . . ." Her shrug implied, "Once you begin with cellars——"

As a matter of fact, night is the only time when one can

feel reasonably safe. Big guns never bombard at night or upon a dark day if they can help it. Even a French "75" makes a glare that picks out the trees around it like white sponges against the darkness, and an Austrian "380" makes a flame that leaps up into the sky, showing too plainly the way for retaliation. Therefore, one did not sleep in a cellar at N——, but went to bed with a light heart, and merely tried to avoid the neighbourhood of the station towards midday—an effort which, as all the restaurants and hotels are round the station, broke down almost at once.

It was pretty sad in N——; nine-tenths of the shops were shut; the region all round and beyond the station might have belonged to a city of the dead, and the effect was like a Sunday in London, except that the sadness was really very much on the surface—underneath the spirit of the people burned as clear as ever. As a matter of fact, the poor Germans have no luck with their shells—some sheds, used for clerks' work, were the only part of the station to be destroyed—the streets around were snowed under with thousands of luggage labels, but the railway remained intact. Here and there houses had collapsed into the street and showed roofing, flooring, furniture, all reduced to the common consistency of matchwood; but these looked no more indecent than does any house under the hand of the housebreaker, when faded wallpapers show fresher patches where pictures used to hang, and combine with gaping grates to make such a shameless exposure of privacy. Demolished houses, like ships at the breaker's yard, and dying men, should all be screened off from the public gaze. The instinct for privacy in death is found in varying force, but at N—— I came across a peculiarly strong example of it. Elsewhere I had found the wounded of a marvellous cheerfulness, and I had seen many hundreds of them. This exception was a dying Savoyard, a wild man of the woods, who, having lost his arm, deliberately set himself to die, saying that he preferred death to life without an arm. He refused all the care he could, set everything, including his fierce will, in the way of doctors and nurses. At the beginning of the bombardment he, with all the other patients in hospitals likely to be shelled, was moved to one in the suburbs which was comparatively safe, but he remained

indifferent to the change. He refused as much as possible even to be cleaned, tearing at his bandages with his teeth, and in his pathetic rage indulging in every filthy practice he was able. He had declined to see a priest, and, savage to the last, when I saw him he was drawing his last stertorous breaths behind a little screen, unconsciousness already granting him the aloofness he had so fiercely craved. The nurse quietly replaced the screen, condemning him as "a man savage and dirty," but to me he seemed the only thoroughly tragic figure I had found in France; this wild beast, trapped against his will, maimed, setting himself to die, uncomforted, inarticulate. I saw nothing as sad even when I attained a hospital just behind the line, where the seriously wounded were rushed straight from the trenches.

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That leave—to go up towards the Front in the heart of zone 1—seemed at first as difficult to obtain as the *sauf-conduit* for N—— had been, and many days went in the obtaining of it. That is a thing one has to resign oneself to. Civilians are not allowed, foreigners are not allowed, women are not allowed; that is the rule, and it is being more and more strictly enforced. Still, the Prefect of the Department, who has come into prominence since the war and is now a notable figure in France, put through my applications to the military authorities in zone 1, and at last I received the blue permit which allowed me as well to go in a motor-car. There were three conditions: that I should write about nothing of military importance that I saw, that in what I did write I should use no names, and that I should publish nothing for several weeks after; and, as I was going with an escort, it was easy for me to find what I might and might not mention.

We went a roundabout way so as to pass through villages whence the Germans had been driven out, and for miles we ran through a country where the tide of war had surged high, and in its backward wash left nothing but wreckage and desolation.

It was a stormy day, and the long, rolling plains, the marshes where pockets of water gleamed, the distant hills, and the endless road, all were permeated by a sullen grey —the mutter of the firing sounded no more alien than thunder in such a scene. At first all the country around was pasture or arable land that had perforce been allowed

to run to rough grass once more; and everywhere the slopes were pitted with shell-holes as with gigantic pockmarks. Over some the grass had already grown, blurring the edges with a film of green, but some were fresh, and the brown earth showed how recent were the gaping wounds of the land; here and there rude graves piled themselves along the wayside. Farther on, to our left, we came upon freshly-dug trenches, which the soldiers, in their stained blue-grey uniforms, were strengthening with lines of barbed wire, that went on up over the slopes, standing out in a stark network against the stormy sky. Away to the right an observation balloon, high in air, tugged at its cords, looking, with its elongated shape, grotesquely like an inflated pig sent up at a fair. High on a hill crest, away behind the last line of trenches, showed the ruins of a farm, famous for its successive batterings from friend and foe, and from this windy hill, looking across the green plains scarred with the brown lines of newly-dug trenches, across a blue blur of distant forest, one could see the fainter blue strip of land which is the beginning of Germany . . . at present. Sight of it, so few miles away, gave a thrill that all the ruins, the shell-holes, the thunder of the artillery failed to give.

Our way began to curve back again slightly towards the east, and now we met detachment after detachment of cavalry, the men very grim and war-stained in their once lovely pale blue uniforms, the horses rough-coated and splashed with mud to their flanks; a harsher clatter mingled with that of the hoofs, and two of the famous "75's" went past, slim and grey and sullen. Followed more cavalry, each man leading a spare mount, and then we came to our first ruined village, which had literally been burnt and bombarded into a dust-heap. At one end was what had once been the *château* of a famous general, which had been burnt by hand as soon as the Germans entered the village. It was now a blackened shell, pierced by the blinded eyes of its window spaces, the fine rain blowing within its walls. Another village and another—the whole countryside, empty save for the soldiers, dead quiet but for the sounds of war, was scattered with them, their crumbled walls of a dirty yellowish-grey, blackened by smoke, hardly distinguishable from the mud and rubble around them. Yet soon signs of life, of a stubborn effort

to reclaim in the deeper sense this land won back from the invader, began to be visible.

On some of the shattered walls new roofs were being constructed or little houses of wood had been erected amid the ruins; hens once more scratched among the rubble, and the great manure-heaps, such an unpleasant but distinctive feature of villages in these parts, were being stacked on either side of the street by patient-eyed women, whose black clothes clung to them in the rain-laden wind. Stretches of land had been ploughed and acre by acre the neglected soil was being won back, though here there are many foes to contend with. Last summer what crops there were were all destroyed by a plague of mice, which, waxing fat on the ungathered harvest in the midst of the fighting, bred mightily, so that in fifty yards you might see twice as many mice making for their holes. Now it is hoped that the rains have drowned them, and that, undisturbed by mice or Germans, the crops may grow to be cut by the women and old men who are toiling to win back their small plots of land. For most of it is owned or rented by small peasant proprietors, and at the village inn where we lunched there was gathered a small committee to consider ways and means. I say "inn," but, as a matter of fact, the inn, with the rest of the village, had been bombarded almost out of existence, and this was a ruined cottage half-built up again, with—a grim touch of humour—some pieces of German shells inserted in the new walls, like drainpipe heads.

Here, in the low, dark room, sat a dozen men, earth-coloured of clothes and even of faces, laboriously making up the accounts of the wood-cutting, which is carried out on a communal system and is a vital part of this reconstructed life. They were served by the *patronne* of this makeshift inn, who had survived five days of bombardment crouched in the cellar of her ruined inn opposite. They were intensely significant, this little group of people, all elderly, all at a time when they should have been thinking to live with a little more ease, yet all, out of the utter ruins of their existence, beginning, painstakingly, to build up, little by little, that fabric of their daily toil which is so one with the land they love. All along the war-zone, as soon as it is even moderately safe, they are doing the same thing, attacking the debased soil, laboriously bringing

together all of force, both physical and mental, that they can, reconstructing their life and the life of their country. . . . But at the door of the inn, staring in front of him, stood the peasant mayor of the village; he had lost his only son in the trenches, and, a few days ago, his wife had been killed, with fifty other women, by a bomb dropped from a Taube on to the market-place at L——, whither we were now bound. To our sympathy all he could reply, as he held our hands and slowly nodded his head up and down, was: "*Tous les malheurs . . . tous les malheurs. . . .*"

At L—— and an outlying district I was able to carry out my mission to the hospitals which remained. There, too, all who could had been removed farther back behind the lines, but some hospitals had to be kept open, shells or no shells, as it was here the wounded men were carried straight from the trenches for their first dressing. They were very poor, these hospitals, for when the Germans were in possession of the town they took everything they could lay their hands on, and the inhabitants have not even any more old linen to tear up into bandages. Yet, here as everywhere, the women are indefatigable, carrying on their husbands' business in the rare cases where any business remains—working day and night in the hospitals, even in those for infectious diseases, and succouring refugees worse off than themselves. Here, as everywhere, the spirit of the wounded is a thing to wonder at and revere, and the whole bent of the people, soldiers and non-combatants, is upon victory, however hard-won and remote.

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This spirit, so close-knit that it presents a fabric unsplit by individual dissensions, is spread over France, out of the war-zone as well as in it, though it is true that within the grim enclosure it is to be seen at its tensest. Nevertheless, France being invaded, even at the fringe, has given the sense of war to the whole in a way we have not felt here, just as the possibility of invasion all these years kept the thought of war real to her. It is no wonder, therefore, that the French attitude towards us is not altogether one of pleased admiration. This feeling of criticism, so discriminating among the educated French people, is unfortunately more unbalanced among the lower classes, who, though in France they are of finer fibre than the ordinary, are still incapable, except in rare cases, of nice under-

standing. The fact remains, that the first wave of enthusiasm for the English has subsided and left the French rather high and dry. One of the reasons for this is that the French are quite incapable of understanding the English mania for self-depreciation. Certain newspapers, which have done much good in England by their drastic criticisms and exposures, have done harm in France. The people read them and marvelled. "What good are these English?" they cried, "*à quoi bon ces Anglais?* They even say themselves they are no good. . . ." And at one time on the boulevards one heard nothing but grumbles against the English. All this is a pity, not only because it is important that the French should be able to respect us, but because it produces a feeling of irritation in the English within their gates. With all our habit of self-dispraise, we do not like to have injustice done us, and murmurs such as these remind us that, after all, in spite of blunders, we have still done a great deal. In the interior of France the people are too completely alien to the feeling of the sea to realise what the work of our Navy means. With the rank and file of the French it is the Russians who hold the highest sentimental place, probably because the Russians not having, in the nature of things, been able to do much for and with them, have remained a glorious abstraction. It is on a par with the cynical adage which says the way to lose a friend is to lend him money. Not that there is the smallest danger of any loosening of friendship between us and France, but in bringing any vast body of men of one nation in contact with another there is bound to be a certain amount of friction. A complete understanding between the two nations is a thing to be worked for, and it is not to be gained by shutting eyes and ears and hoping for the best. Now that we have compulsion this *rapprochement* should be easier, for that is something which the French know and understand. "Are you going to have conscription?" was the one eager question on every tongue in those weeks while its fate hung in the balance. For the union of a nation's force, which is impossible without the democracy of universal service, can alone bring about that fusion which France has attained. The united soul of her people is pressing towards fruition as surely as the crops that are ripening over the battle-torn countryside, and, like them, it has been watered by blood and tears.

# England and America

## By Austin Harrison

Of the many ominous blunders committed by the Coalition, none has been more evil, stupid, or so potentially dangerous as the policy of secrecy imposed by the lawyers, which has isolated us from the free people of America. When war broke out they did attempt something which took the form of a surreptitious Press Bureau under the ægis of Mr. Masterman, who, with almost sublime idiocy, dispatched "Peter Pan" and a small party of fashionable novelists to New York—where they were promptly informed that the American Press knew its own business and certainly did not require the aid of playwrights and other literati, however distinguished in their own sphere, to instruct it: the dramatists and novelists returned. Since when Mr. Asquith seems to have made up his mind that, as the Americans were "not taking any," so neither should we, with the result that the two so-called free peoples have been driven to the point of exasperation, nothing being more offensive to Americans than mystification, and no policy being more conducive to German machination.

It would seem timely, even necessary, to say a straight word about this matter.

Now our general attitude towards America is based on muddled thinking. Men say, "Why don't the Americans come in?" All over the place one notices resentment at American neutrality. Not long ago people were freely expressing indignation and actual animosity towards America. When Mr. Wilson declared that America was "too proud to fight," we looked upon that rather sophisticated utterance as an "unfriendly" act. And we ask ourselves with surprise whatever the Americans are thinking about that they respond so coldly to our protestations.

All this is silly and dangerous. We forget that America is an independent State. We forget that America

is a neutral country. We forget that the Stars and Stripes represent the flag of the New World, and in no way our "Jack," and that it has always been the wise policy of America not to interfere in European affairs, as, indeed, it has been ours not to impinge upon the Monroe Doctrine.

It is well to state this. Our American "expectations" have no justification. To expect America to take up the cudgels on our behalf is neither manly nor English. This is our war—our trial with Germany. America, that vast congeries of peoples and tongues, is as separate from us as the moon, and has no interest in the European war. It is not for us to advise the Americans or criticise them. They have declared for neutrality—we may be sure they are capable of taking their own decisions. Any attempt to influence them—by Press comment, cartoon, or lampoon—has not only no chance of success, but may justly be regarded by them as presumptuous.

That is the position.

What is the problem between England, America, and Germany? Briefly, it is the introduction of the new arm, the submarine, and the German use of it. Accurately stated, it is the use of it that has caused the trouble, and the difficulty has arisen at that point where force collides with the law, as it existed before the war.

The Germans know no law in war, or, rather, they only recognise the law when, and in as far as, it operates favourably to them. Their attitude is thus logical. We know where we are with them. They are pirates on the seas. The new weapon has provided them with a chance. They take it, as we have seen, as we shall probably further see in connection with the arming of merchant ships and the new boats they are known to have designed to attack them.

Now America, in the face of this German piracy, has found herself in a quandary. There have been long and complicated negotiations with Germany, the nature of which we do not know, but which substantially have come down to this. America recognises the submarine, Germany is supposed to recognise the rights of neutrals. (I say supposed to, for that she will recognise any rights that are not convenient to her I do not believe for a moment.) Anyhow, that is the position between Germany and America. The submarine has come to stay just as aerial warfare has

come to stay. I fancy all sailors will agree that a new weapon entails new conditions, and that when it comes to war the law must know how to adapt itself or go to blazes.

What did we do? Exactly what lawyers in charge would do. Having refused, on good naval grounds, to ratify the Declaration of London, which guaranteed the trading rights of neutrals, thereby practically neutralising the power of the Blockade, when war came we signed on to it, with one reservation regarding the import of contraband destined for belligerent use: which naturally was a paper embargo. Then when the Germans declared a Blockade, we retaliated with an Order in Council, which theoretically gave us the right to hold up German commerce, inward and outward, through neutral ports. And here we touched on an American principle. There arose that old sea-serpent, the Freedom of the Seas, and here German cunning and American jurisprudence met on a basis of understanding.

The Freedom of the Seas means the right of neutrals to trade, even in war. In the Napoleonic wars we encountered the same trouble, but met it, like men; that is to say, we fought it. "Here stands the Navy, touch it if you dare," Pitt said. And though many squealed, the neutrals did not touch it. On the contrary, our firmness weaned the neutrals from Buonaparte's "Armed Neutrality League"; the strangulation of "Boney" went on, and we won the great war in consequence.

How do we stand towards the Freedom of the Seas? Well, we don't know. That is the difficulty. Our Twenty-two never tell us anything. Parliament is quite as ignorant about our attitude as is the public. All that we know is that Sir E. Grey coquetted with the idea, going so far as publicly to indicate a "review" of the question after the war—which astonishing *naïveté* in war of course gave the Germans their cue to press the case home in America, where, we must not forget, we have had a standing historic difference on the question of the "rights of capture," and the average American takes much the same view of Navalism as the average politician here takes of Militarism. This came out in Mr. Wilson's third *Lusitania* despatch, wherein he laid it down that Germany and America were at one in "contending for the freedom of the seas," and

"will continue" to contend for that freedom, "without compromise and without cost."

We could have avoided the issue if, instead of fighting with "juridical niceties," we had declared a Blockade and made it effective, for the Americans recognise the legality of the Blockade, and, indeed, would have welcomed its proclamation. But, instead, we resorted to formula. While seeking to impose the trident of the law, we scuttled the very forms upon which it is based. In a word, Mr. Asquith compromised, and thereby gave the American lawyers their opportunity. And if America to-day is perplexed at our inconsequent interpretation now of the law, and now of war, it is not for us to chafe at the consequences. America has the grievance. All that America has demanded is logic. We have tried to play at once the seaman and the lawyer: they are bad partners. Our lawyers' attempt to "fix up" the German torpedo with a protocol has merely resuscitated the old historic difference of opinion between us and America with regard to the Freedom of the Seas, and let the Germans pass through the eye-hole of the law as we let their ships pass through the Straits into Constantinople.

We must not forget that it was Cobden who started this sea-serpent. War, he contended, was "not the relation between peoples." Sir E. Grey is reputed a Cobdenite. He first sounded the note of retreat. If America took him at his word, that is not her fault; as a fact, ever since Franklin's day this question has been an American ideal and one of the chief issues of international law.

America thus has two problems: one concerning German piracy, which is not our concern at all; the other concerning her considered attitude towards a great principle of law—which we have enabled her to raise by waiting to see what would happen if we left it to her to decide the issue for us. America's attitude may not be heroic, but it is logical. It is we who have entangled the argument. It is our attempt to wig-and-gown the sailors that has given Tirpitz his right of subpœna. And if we don't take care Tirpitz may yet get a judgment for his submarine piracy, even as we get his torpedoes. To complain is foolish. A nation which persists in fighting under lawyers takes its own risks, and suffers its just penalties." "Forgive us this

day our lawyers' daily trespass" may be our prayer, but it is not America's litany. Nor is it "playing the game": of law or of war.

Time after time Americans have come over here to see what is the matter with us; to place before Ministers the folly, the dangers of "hiding facts," censoring the Press, and ignoring the great relationship between the English and American peoples. In vain. When we publish the American Notes, we suppress the appendices. The public here knows nothing of the negotiations. Democracy, that political misnomer, is kept in contemptuous ignorance of the facts of its "People's" war. So ignorant is it that it fancies America is hostile to us, and so the lawyers are free to blunder again and again, and the mischief spreads to the increasing disadvantage of the two English-speaking worlds.

It is time we understood that this is our war. We have got to fight it. America is providing us with all the necessaries to win it. Without this overseas' help our position would be in the highest degree critical. Criticism of America is not only in the worst possible taste, it is positively scandalous, and let the man who doubts cast an eye on the latest return of American exports to this country and to our Allies. The truth is that, thanks to our unpreparedness, we should not have been in a position to continue the struggle without America, who may well be called our true latent force. If this war is to be won by attrition, then it will depend on this latent force.

We shall be wise to preserve a little more dignity in our attitude towards America. If we cannot make up our minds to use our own sea-power, it is not for us to whine because America does not use hers. She is probably helping us more as an exporting neutral than she would as belligerent. And though this may sound uncomfortably like what Sir E. Grey is alleged to have said to the German Ambassador regarding our intervention in 1914 (he has never denied the charge, as he ought to have done), in the case of America it is true; and not only ought we to know it, but we should be unworthy indeed if we did not gratefully and wholeheartedly acknowledge it.

# In the Interval

## By Austin Harrison

THE momentous announcement of the appointment of a new Committee to consider the question of air defence furnishes agreeable testimony to the implicit confidence placed by the Twenty-two in the staying power of the people, blooded now for all eccentricities of bomb, man or German. Like the Pope, Mr. Asquith to-day has attained to infallibility. He is irreplaceable.

Mr. Asquith is the best Captain of XI. we have ever had. With that democratic sociability that is his charm and our pride, he utilises all his bowlers, and when a man "butters" a catch in the long field no captain so quick as he to excuse the miss with a cheery phrase about the "sun in the poor chap's eyes" or the "infernal height" of the thing, which, of course, makes it "awfully difficult"—in the interval he is quite too captivating. It was in the interval I dreamed I had this interview with him.

"Zepps! Nothing of the kind! Zepps aren't cricket. In these islands we are gentlemen. We have always considered the air a close preserve for grouse and pheasants. Before the war we regarded—and I think I may say rightly regarded—these islands as immune from all exotic influences. The People would never have tolerated our playing about with gas-bags and things that flop through the air. We were too proud to inquire what the foreigners were doing or hatching. To-day we are behind. Who said behind? We are in front. We have more war committees deliberating than all the belligerent Powers put together. Our Government is the one stable thing in Europe. Shift us! They can't. And shall I tell you why? Because, my friend, there is no one to take my place. I am the State. Responsibility! It is not our way. See, I have named six men now to assume responsibility for the air. Six! Do you follow me? No matter

what happens, they cannot pin responsibility on to six experts. I've put Mr. Balfour into the dilution team, too. He fields admirably at long stop. He is an institution. They dare not go for him. It wouldn't be gentlemanly. It wouldn t pay. Ha! Ha! And war does pay. So long as it pays they will never turn us out. As for those who do kick up a row, why there is always the Upper House, and when it comes to that, you know, we are a Democracy, which means that every third man is against the other. We govern India like that. I've been fighting nearly nineteen months on that principle. Of course we've no guns to hit Zepps with. How should we have? We never expected to use any guns anywhere, any more. We believed in banks or idealism. We are middlemen or gentlemen. If Bülow would come over here and play me a match of tip-and-run, I'd back myself any day. But the fellow won't. He doesn't know the rules. All I can say is that a man who can't learn the rules ought not to make war at all. Personally, I hate war. I look upon it as *infra dig*. But one thing, I assure you, I'm not going to do. I'm not going to upset our principles, our institutions, our rules, and our playing-fields for any old Prussian, no matter how many submarines or gas-bags he has. I'm really firm on that point. I may mention it is about the only thing I am firm about. What the Germans want is to force me to make the country utilise its resources. They are cunning devils. They would like nothing better than to see me tell Mr. Balfour to go on with his tennis and put a sailor in his place. They would simply love to have me abolish all my committees which provide war employment to so many nice men. They would call it a 'scream' if I were to appoint, say, one man to organise our air defence, or one man to be responsible for this or that. They would call that a victory, and it would be a victory which I will never tolerate.

"We mean to smash Prussian militarism, not to assume that militarism. We mean to show the Germans that war is not a scientific pursuit, but a dirty Prussian trick and that muddle-through can beat it. We mean to be firm on that point, to have it illustrated, to placard our walls with posters to that effect, if expedient. Did I say the public? If I did, I meant it. I don't often mean what

I say, or I should never have sworn not to introduce compulsion, but there, we can always exempt. With pride I say, We are amateurs. We joined the Entente so as not to fight; and it was our illusion. Don't talk to me of militarism. We don't believe in science in this island. We don't want airships and don't believe in them. We want to be left alone to go on with our games and our politics, like gentlemen. We don't intend to be downhearted because we are ten years behind the Germans. The critics who complain to-day should have complained sooner, and put us out. Well, they didn't or couldn't. And here we are. The critics will have to lump it. Regarding war as a sport, the people won't stand adverse comment. It is a monstrous thing, they think, to attack a Government at war. So it is. We do our best as amateurs. But civilian control is essential. We don't want the soldiers in power. That would be the last straw and break all the rules of politics. Nor would it be constitutional. There, that's final, see!

"There is my friend Seely—a finer-looking War Minister never walked up Pall Mall. What more can London want? Yet they can't leave him alone, simply because the poor fellow did not mug up the facts about aerial warfare supposed to be scheduled at Carmelite House. In a newspaper office! A newspaper! Well, we are going to stop the import of paper. Perhaps that will silence some of them. Less paper, less jaw. I can get a verdict on that. When they say to me, 'What about Zepps?' I say to them, 'What price sulphite, eh?', and I fancy the smile is not on the face of the printer. Sulphite is indispensable for paper, you know. But I won't be technical—if it wasn't for this infernal technical mania we should never have had war or been threatened in this way. But there it is. Seely is the best chap in the world, and if I say so it must be true, for there is no man in England fit to take my place, proof of which lies in the fact, and it is a fact, that no man has ever ventured to ask the King for the billet.

"Even when they do try in Parliament to get what the papers call a 'push-and-go' atmosphere, they draw back. You see, they have to draw back. I run the Coalition. We are a Constitutional people—there is no alternative.

Bar God, there never was a man so indispensable as I am, so sacrosanct, so entirely of and on the State. It is almost embarrassing. Indeed, it would be embarrassing were it not that I'm used to it. I'm like the old oak they used to sing about. Another man might get flurried, and so would I were it not that my remedy is like a patent pill, simple, soothing, and perfectly harmless. Needless to say, I refer to the formula.

No man can play me at that game. I spend my mornings weighing the little words and meanings, and, no matter what sensation the daily papers may produce, I find my formula spick and span, ready, aye, ready, and always it acts and nobody is a penny the worse. Nothing like the formula in war. A man in the Cabinet gets fretful and anxious, proposes this, vetoes that, becomes obstreperous. Well, I sit down after breakfast and spin my web. At noon he has it before him. At dinner we talk it over. Over the cigars we laugh. Laughter is the best of medicines. Only Carson refused my formula, but he is an Irishman and they are a strange folk, these Irish, for you never know where you are with them. Now the Germans have no sword so sharp as my formula.

"The country thought we were going to 'get it' over Gallipoli. Not a bit—we got them off instead. Bit of luck! Perhaps. They thought they had 'got' me over Salonika—not a bit, the Germans never attacked. They hoped Serbia would do the business. Sold again. This time Joffre obliged with the formula. They reckoned on Mesopotamia, Montenegro, but they reckoned without their host, for the hosts escaped. At one time they thought Winston would bring me down. Bah! I threatened to make him Brigadier-General. The formula, see! When Sir John seceded, they pricked up their ears again. Once more it was no good. Sir John is no politician. Only Haldane looked dangerous for a while. I walked up a hill and cogitated. Haldane was the one man who knew German. He really had tried to bite granite. He overdid the 'spiritual' side of politics, always a mistake. When he bulked too ominously in the nation's eye, why, I dropped the Pilot, as if I were the German Emperor. He understood. You know what the French say. Retire to jump better. It tickled him. He retired to his books and his

Goethe. But if any man ought to be Air Minister, surely Lord Haldane is the man. He is master of airy planing. For years he fought the Germans—in the flights of imagination. He stayed too long up aloft. And what he does not know about Charlottenburg metaphysics is simply not worth knowing.

"Now they hope the Zepps are going to 'put me out.' Wait and see. I've got a pretty strong committee to bear the assault. I've ear-marked Sir Percy Scott, I've dragged in Lord French, I've 'watered' my staff in a manner they will find it difficult to locate, so many are they, so institutional are their several reputations. A reputation goes a long way; besides, I always keep a pail of whitewash at Downing Street. It saves the char, hides the cracks, and looks well. They use it on policemen in the harlequinade, you know, so that it is a perfectly English tradition. It makes men laugh. A good thing, this laughter of ours. A little Cockney goes a long way. Call a man 'good old Turnip,' and nothing can shake him. I always find a pleasant word for my responsible servitors. It encourages them, and disarms the others. They call me ''Squith' in the drawing-rooms, and think it hurts me. Idiots! In this country, we still worship Mr. Pickwick. Nothing like a nickname. What was Chamberlain without his 'Jo'? What was Gladstone without 'collars'? They call Kitchener K. They call me ''Squith.' Libel! Lord bless my soul, no! I like it. Why, I stand for it. It is because Haldane never had a nickname that he is not to-day running the War Office. If he hadn't gone to Germany so much, no doubt he would have acquired one. I can tell you this. You can't hold England without it.

"Then there is Grey. The Foreign Office, they say. It ought to have saved Serbia, etc. How could it? How could the Foreign Office be expected to know what the Huns would do? It isn't decent to speak disrespectfully of the Foreign Office. But Grey is safe enough. He's the perfect squire. I think it's his aquiline nose that wins their hearts. Anyhow, they can't shift him. You see, his reputation is that he 'does not care.' That always scores in the land of the public schools standard. His 'form' is so exquisite. No 'side,' just form. It's quite his strongest point, just as Mr. Balfour's armour is that he does

not 'read the newspapers.' Form this time, as distinct from formula. Now Beresford had bulldogs. Thank Goodness, he's gone up to the mizzentopgallant-stay, so he's safe, and, to tell the truth, I'm rather relieved. A potential fellow on the platform. Now he's Lord of some place or other on the map I had forgotten all about, and that's that. As for the other revolutionaries, why, look here! I'll let you into a secret. Set a revolutionary to catch a revolutionary is my policy, and there's no better ferret in the land. Question of money's worth. You send in the title on a platter by Mr. Yellowplush. You interview this newspaper proprietor, or you dine that editor, or you play bridge with that young hopeful—and the rest follows of itself. The proprietors are jealous of one another. The editors fear the proprietors. The hopefuls—how many hopefuls are there?

"Stanton!—a Socialist. We like Socialists, they terrify the Dukes. Northcliffe! As well suggest Botha. We hate strong men. Why, he hasn't even got a nickname, he's no stuff in politics. Some time ago they tried to get the editors to meet. What happened? They were mostly out of town that afternoon. Nothing coalitionable doing on the Press. No, you can't upset me with sensation. I am the sensation—of all Europe. 'How do you do it?' necessitous ex-ministers write to me. 'How do you manage to square them all?' I will tell you.

"I just do nothing. I wait and see. Something always turns up. 'Jack' runs the Parliamentary 'gym.' and does it deuced well, I consider, for a novice. They can't talk him down. They dare not revolutionise there because of the Coalition, which was, perhaps, the cleverest formula I ever invented. A wink from Bonar Law and the very hotheads subside into melancholy optimism. After all, we are at war, though one might not think it sometimes. That is the virtue of a Coalition, there is no opposition. Public school discipline is Westminster's code. We don't play at Cromwellism in our yard. We haven't time. Too many questions to be answered. Nor would it be considered gentlemanly; nay, so long as there is no Cromwell there cannot be any 'heads off,' can there? I don't see any Cromwells, do you? Or any General Monk either? We've got his statue instead.

"Seriously, I think these snipers, these 'get-on-with-the-war' gentry, are merely harming themselves. It's not our genius to get excited. 'Wellington whipped "Boney,"' men say, 'who was the greatest soldier in history, therefore we are the best soldiers ever since.' There is logic in that. Anyhow, the public believes it. It believes in me. It hates science, and all that kind of thing. The British public dislikes facts, and in that it resembles the lawyers. It loathes the man who is always telling them what to do or how to win the war. It prefers to leave the war to the British Constitution. It likes to think Eton is making the runs. It is proud of being unprepared, non-scientific, too late, as they say the fag side of Temple Bar. And, by the Lord, the public is right. We can't lose the war. We've got the seas, the gold mines, and the ships. But I tell you what I'm thinking of doing. If the plots and intrigues go on I'll make Mr. Lloyd George sole responsible Minister of Air, and that will about do for him the next time the Zepps come over, or, if it comes to the worst, I'll appoint one of Lord Northcliffe's brothers.

"If they think the Kaiser's Zeppelins are going to turn me out, they'll find they've backed the wrong cigar. I can always turn on Mr. Balfour in the House, which, short of a *coup d'état* (touch wood!), is the only place where I and my team can come a cropper. When Balfour tells them, with that charming nonchalance of his, that 'if we had guns we should use them,' or 'if we had machines they would go up,' believe me these sons of Pitt and Nelson get a lump in their throats. It is like hitting a man when he is down going for Mr. Balfour about aeroplanes. How can he be blamed for Churchill's similes? It isn't decent to make a row in the House. Only the women do that kind of thing. I tell you, *in extremis* Mr. Balfour's bedside manner is inimitable and in a Coalition invaluable. He has the grand air, and he doesn't read the newspapers. Together, he and I can steady Parliament at any time, for they only listen to men who can talk there. If George is away ringing up the 'control,' there is nobody who can fence with me. The Parties are 'on the fence,' and questions, as you know, hurt no one, especially in the way my Tennant dodges them.

"Personally, I think it most unpatriotic of people to make

a fuss at running the risk of being bombed. They ought to be proud to share the dangers of the field. It is a point I don't think our Press has made half enough of, and that reminds me, I must speak to Charlie Masterman about it. If we want to fight Zeppelins we ought not to have so many trees and hedges about. But, as I said before, I don't approve of Zeppelin warfare; I don't approve of the air at all as a zone of operations, and I would like it to be known that I hereby deliberately put it to the Germans that it is ungentlemanly, unsportsmanlike, and contrary to all precedent to use the air, which is birdland, for purposes of military utility, when nature has given them the sea and what they hold of the land on the way to Calais.

"I go farther. Not only do I say, no retaliation; I say, no bird tricks for me. Quite seriously, I am thinking how we can humanise or neutralise the air. I would declare a Blockade were it not for the row made about our Freedom of the Seas Order in Council, but that is exploded.. Still, I admit that something will have to be done. Really, these Germans have disappointed me. I cannot think what Haldane was about when he 'monkeyed' us about Germany. He never told us about their air 'homes.' I suppose the dear man thought they were so near heaven that he forgot to mention the subject. At any rate, he did do something with our artillery, I believe. Speyer never told me about the air either, nor for that matter did any of my German Privy Councillors. It was most thoughtless of them. As for Speyer, considering that he practically kept an aerodrome for wind and string, I think he behaved downright bad, and next time we meet I'm going to tell him so.

"Yes, at one time they banked on the Danish Trading agreement; they thought if they made enough fuss about a 'leaky' Blockade we would haul down our Free Trade flag. It was very foolish of them. You play poker? Well, I *saw* the editors and I used the jigger. Sea Power was all very well for Captain Marryat, but it would never do to allow seamen to run the show. Bless me, what do they know of the Law, or the niceties, the loopholes, of the Law? Fancy allowing some daredevil of a sailor to decide what the Fleet is to do! Why, he'd play the deuce. He'd blockade the neutrals. He'd offend people. He'd certainly break some principle. No, no, we haven't come

to that. Besides, I don't think Smith would like it. When Smith goes over to France he makes the soldiers sit up, I can tell you. He's not Attorney-General for nothing. They can't trip him up, as soldier or civilian. He's as good an actor as old Macready.

"No, the truth is I feel quite hurt at this rumpus about the Blockade-runners. We'd settled the thing splendidly; no one knew; the neutrals were satisfied and so was Germany. What more can the public want, except a few victories? Then up jumps 'Tommy' Bowles with statistics and quotations from Pitt. Well, what the Dickens did Pitt know of the Law? Why, we had the press-gang then! It's just like the shell business, you remember, simply because I made a great patriotic speech at Newcastle. They're jealous of my speeches. How could I know how many shells we had or were likely to have? I ask. If I did know I shouldn't say, should I? I'm not an expert, Blimy! I'm not supposed to lead or govern. I'm not Mr. Redmond or the German Emperor. I should lose my infallibility at once if I tried the George stunt and told people what to do, not to drink or to get on with their work. Why, I'm not sure it wouldn't be unconstitutional to tell the people what to do. With the Army and Navy it is different. They stand under civilian control, and very properly, too.

"Really, these scaremongers and 'explain-the-war' folk are too stupid. They don't understand politics. They don't realise that London is not England and that in a commercial country such as ours interest plays such an important part that disinterest and impersonal motives are positively suspect. Old Trebitsch discovered that, the Sherlock Holmes. He is a very slippery fellow. He knew how to play the game. He's the Lincoln handicap, he is. The people only understand politics and we've told them there are no politics. So we're bomb-proof, we are. Call it positional stagnation, if you please. I stand because no one can see who *can take my place*, and the reason of that is because no man can see beyond the terms of the constitution. You remember what Haldane always told us about education. Old 'Mat' said it years ago. I can't help it, can I? We haven't got a Ministry of Education, and if the people think I'm good enough it's hardly for me

to disabuse them. You can't get up a scare on education. Try it. Just put a firm, fierce man in my place and see what Democracy will say. No, believe me, we don't want responsibility or any of your Corsican sort here. They're played out, and that is why we are played in.

"Believe me, we are a pretty hot team. Smith at cover (and there is no smarter field); Balfour long-stop; Bonar Law mid-off; Runciman, short slip; Cecil, mid-on; Grey, third-man; McKenna at short-leg, and Samuel at silly-point, and I at the sticks, we can say to all the conspirators in Britain, 'Put on your best bowlers at Westminster, if you dare.' Outside, it is only village cricket, where the village idiot is always on the look-out to make off with the ball. The only real danger is a bomb on Downing Street. That might down me; nothing else can, not even the new taxes I'm advised to put on. And now I think I have shown that there never was such a Coalition or one so safe from criticism. If I may reveal the secret of its success I will parody a phrase of Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust*: 'We have omitted so much that now there is nothing left for us to omit'—and if you can find a better formula, well, formulate it, only remember: you can't fall back on Habeas corpus."

# The Martyrdom of an Army

## By Alice and Claude Askew

It is over now—the great Serbian retreat across the cold grey mountains of Montenegro and Albania has become past history, but we who rode with the troops from Pirot to Liesh can never forget what we have seen. Grim and ghastly pictures are stamped for ever upon our brains, for during that ride we witnessed the slow famishing of man and beast; we watched strong men become the mere shadows of themselves; we saw despair take hold of what had once been a valiant, light-hearted army—bitter and most sombre despair.

Some men refused to retreat; they shouted that they wanted to fight, not to fly, and they had to be shot for refusing to obey orders—terrible work this, an inexpressibly hard command for an officer to have to give.

The hospital to which we were attached, the First British Field Hospital for Serbia, severed its connection with the Second Army at Pirot, where our hospital had to be evacuated at a few hours' notice, but we ourselves determined to follow the fortunes of the army instead of retiring to Krushevatz with the mission, for we wanted to give our readers, who had helped so generously with funds for the mission in the past, some account of how the soldiers were bearing themselves during the retreat.

Captain Jean Gworsditch, the Aide-de-Camp of the Staff of the Second Army, lent us his chargers, and we shall always be thankful that we rode with the troops, for we can give the testimony of eye-witnesses as to the splendid discipline that prevailed, the sublime endurance; but it is impossible to write of some of the horrors we saw during the slow retreat across the mountains, for the martyrdom of man and beast went on daily as soldier and horse and ox fell down, exhausted, to die—soldier and horse and ox!

When a starved horse fell the soldiers used their knives with ghastly celerity. At first we sickened and our chargers reared and plunged passing these pools of blood, but we got hardened to the sight at last. It was infinitely more painful watching the abandoned horses, who would often stand motionless on the very edge of the precipice—waiting in dumb agony for death.

The oxen stumbled to their knees and were dragged on again, poor, patient beasts, with their dark, sorrowful eyes; the mud was often a foot deep in places, and the horses sometimes stuck in the mud and had to be left to their fate, just as the soldiers had to be left who fell out exhausted, for the army had at all costs to press on—the army had to be saved, for Serbia had put practically all her manhood into the field, the "dernier reserve" had been called out, and this meant that boys as well as old men were serving under the colours. So, for the sake of the future—Serbia's future—her men had to safeguard their lives, determine to exist; but it must not be forgotten that the soldiers ascending the steep mountain path had a terrible spiritual burden to carry—they did not know what fate had befallen their women, and this knowledge pressed on them sore, this knowledge took the heart out of them more than anything else.

Pity the troops—troops marching on blindly, aware that their nearest and dearest were in the hands of hated foes. Men's faces sharpened day after day, hour after hour, as they wondered what was happening to their mothers, their wives, their sisters, their sweethearts; big tears would roll down the cheeks of fathers who thought of their children, and they were aware—these poor fellows—that it would be months before they could have any definite news as to what was really happening in Serbia; but they knew—most tragic knowledge—that their cities, their homes, and their families were at the mercy of the Huns, the Austrians, and the Bulgarians, and the iron entered into the soul of the troops; they suffered not only physically, but spiritually.

There was constant danger, all through the march, of attack from Albanian brigands. Serbian soldiers were massacred at Jakova—the Director of the Second Hospital at Nish was murdered in cold blood as he rode, as he

thought, towards safety. Woe for any stragglers who fell out during the daily march, for the Albanians slunk down from the hills at night-time and fell upon these men like wolves.

Captain Gworsditch had an ugly story to tell us one evening. He described how the staff had suddenly come upon the mutilated corpses of about fifty transport drivers of the Second Army, as they rode through a mountain pass. Treachery had been at work. Some Albanians, it appeared, had shown a body of Bulgarian cavalry a certain passage through the hills, and the Bulgarians had descended upon the unarmed transport drivers, annexed the pack-horses and oxen, and then bound the men hand and foot and slashed them with their swords—carved their wretched victims to ribbons. The snow, Captain Gworsditch said, was still red with blood, but the dead men had gone to plead their cause before the great white throne!

A flickering ray of hope cheered the army, however, for the Montenegrin authorities gave the most solemn promises that food and forage would be awaiting the troops at Andreavitz; but when, after strenuous marching, Andreavitz was reached, we found that all these promises had been broken. There was no food for the starving men, there was no forage for the starving beasts.

The army had to march on, and it was not to be wondered at that soldier after soldier fell out and that horse after horse and ox after ox sank dying on the stony path; the smell of death got into the very air at last, the chill of death hung over the troops.

They knew that they were a beaten army, a broken army, and the knowledge was hard to bear, galling! Besides, they had not been beaten on the battlefield; foreign Cabinets, with their ill-judged diplomacy, had brought this tragedy to pass. Serbia, who alone and single-handed had rid her country of the Austrian invader more than a year ago, had now been conquered, possessed, ravaged, and her friends and acquaintances had stood afar off. They had bidden Serbia sheath her sword at the wrong moment and their own swords had not been ready to defend her, and now Belgrade was in ashes, and the Kaiser and Ferdinand of Coburg—oh! most worthy pair of arch-hypocrites—toasted each other at Nish, and the men of Serbia

were retreating before their foes, leaving their pale women to the mercy of the conquerors—bitter knowledge for a proud army; bitter, bitter knowledge, inexpressible humiliation.

Old Stepanovitch, the *voivoda* of the Second Army, shed tears of impotent rage at times, but what could he or his troops do? Serbia had fallen, Greece had betrayed her, not a promise made had been kept, and the shame of this retreat was not with Serbia, if the soldiers—poor, wretched fellows—could only have been brought to see it. No, the stinging shame lay with others; the smug diplomats who sat in their easy chairs and pitied this starving army more or less patronisingly—the men who had no food in their craving bellies, the men who hung their heads because of this enforced retreat.

The army halted at Podgoritza and again at Scutari. Both towns were crowded to overflowing and food was only to be obtained at famine prices. A perfect state of panic prevailed in Scutari whenever the church bells rang out to warn the townsfolk that the Austrian aeroplane was on its way to drop bombs. The inhabitants who possessed cellars retired there at once, all business was at an end for the day, shopkeepers bolted their doors and put up their shutters; any amount of people ran to the fields by the side of the lake—judging this the safest place; in fact, perfect pandemonium reigned.

Early in January the Second Army received their orders to march to Liesh, where it was hoped they would only have to make a brief stay, transport having been promised at St. Giovanni di Medua. We left Scutari the same day as the staff, riding Captain Gworsditch's horses. It was a two days' ride to Liesh, along a grey, melancholy road, past dank, swampy fields and malaria-haunted swamps.

We stayed nearly three weeks at Liesh—such a town, hardly any accommodation to be had in it. Bread only to be obtained through a military order; neither eggs nor milk nor butter to be had for love or money, sugar charged for at the rate of eight shillings a pound, no fresh vegetables to be bought, no wine or brandy.

The soldiers starved in the streets; they died in front of our very windows; most of these poor fellows had not been able to keep up with their regiments on the march

and so had gone without food for days, reaching Liesh only to die of exhaustion.

The priest attached to the Second Army had to bury between thirty and forty men a day, and an officer we knew well told us a ghastly little story.

Arriving cold and half-frozen after a long day's ride at Liesh, he entered a broken-down stable, noticing that some soldiers had kindled a fire there and were sitting round it trying to warm themselves after their march. There were fourteen men in the circle, but four of these men were dead. They had died as they sat by the fire and their comrades were too spent and weary to remove the corpses from their midst—living and dead sat circle-wise together round the flaming logs.

The hospital at Liesh soon became a mere mortuary; there was nothing to give the sick men who were brought there, not a medical drug; all that could be done was to put the wretched patients down on straw and pray that their death would come soon.

Prince Alexander, the Heir Apparent, arrived at Liesh on January 16th. It had been arranged that he should embark at once at St. Giovanni, but the Prince—sick and ill though he was, for he was recovering slowly from a severe operation—refused to take safety in flight. He had come across the stiff and frozen corpses of starved soldiers as he drove in a rude carriage to Liesh, and his heart was sore for his army. He knew that all hope of obtaining transport for the troops at St. Giovanni was over, and that the exhausted Second Army must press on to Durazzo and embark there for Corfu—another grim and terrible march; but the Prince Regent swore that he would accompany his soldiers, even though he would have to be carried in a litter.

We ourselves left St. Giovanni on January 19th by one of the last boats. We had to fly, for the fall of Cettinje had been announced and Scutari was threatened, but it was painful work saying good-bye to our friends on the staff, for we knew not what their fate would be or if they would ever reach Durazzo alive.

And now the great Serbian retreat is over and Mr. Asquith has been informing the House of Commons what a cause for congratulation it is that so large a proportion

of the Serbian Army has been preserved—to fight another day; but what of the dead bones that bleach on the path that the army has trod, and who is going to give back her starved soldiers to Serbia—the martyrs of the march, the victims?

And Serbia has suffered so silently; her famished men made no complaint as they sank down and died—they said nothing and Serbia says nothing. She, like her army, suffers silently; but, oh! God above us, what a terrible silence this is—what a condemning silence!

The anguish of Serbia—who can write about it?—the anguish of a nation whose heart has been broken—whose pride—and the tears of Serbia are as the bloody sweat that fell at Gethsemane. But her courage—ah! indeed, we can unloose our tongues when talking of her courage and her patience, we can be uplifted by it, exalted, for this little nation has never been more glorious than in her moment of earthly defeat. In the sight of the unwise she seemed to die, but she has laid hold of life immortal—for the spirit of Serbia is unconquerable, the soul of Serbia is uncowed.


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# The Banks

## By Raymond Radclyffe

"SAFE as a bank" is one of our proverbs, which a hundred years ago was very misleading, but is to-day quite accurate. Banks in the old days failed quite regularly, but bank failures now are very rare. The reason is quite simple. The banks have consolidated: weak bankers have been bought up by stronger ones. Some people grumble at this tendency to amalgamate. They complain that the old-fashioned banker, who knew each customer personally and would lend money readily without security, has vanished. A good job too. It was such muddling, unbusinesslike people who not only ruined themselves, but also all who put trust in them. They were not strong enough to stand any financial gale. In bad weather they sank by the hundred. The joint stock bank has eaten up the private banker. In 1887 there were 366 individual banks. I do not think that to-day there remain more than thirty. Amalgamation makes for strength.

The great joint stock banks are a British institution which must be supported by the whole financial power of the Empire. Another Overend Gurney crisis is most unlikely. Then the Bank of England found the affairs of that bank so involved that they refused to support it. A panic ensued. But there was no banking panic when the Birkbeck closed its doors. The depositors suffered some inconvenience and a little loss, but the whole affair went smoothly, thanks to the solidarity of British banking. Amalgamation and consolidation had given everyone confidence. When war broke out world credit received a terrific shock, and, somewhat unwisely, the Government forced the banks to close their doors for five days. But when they reopened confidence had been completely restored and the trade of the country went on as before, the foreign exchange business being the only branch that

was completely dislocated. The semi-panic of August, 1914, showed: First, that the British Government realised that it must stand behind the joint stock banks in days of stress. Secondly, that the banks themselves enjoyed the complete confidence of their customers. We may put this display of confidence down to the policy of amalgamation.

No one can deny that the absorption policy has its defects. The present system of huge corporations, with hundreds of branches all over the country, has forced the banker to adopt hard-and-fast rules. Managers of branches have practically no initiative. They have their book of rules. They must abide by them. If anything happens which is not provided for in the rules it must be referred to the head office, which itself is also bound by stringent laws. This tends to make the bank clerk into a mere machine. It atrophies his brain. It paralyses his energies. But it makes him meticulously honest and very trustworthy. It almost eliminates the element of risk. It preserves the deposits of the customers. It gives an extraordinary solidity to British banking. The modern banker may not be a great financier, but he is absolutely sound. He may not be brilliant, but you can rely upon him. He never does anything that will jeopardise the money which you have left in his custody.

An agitation has been raised lately in favour of English banks following the example of the German banks. Nothing could be more foolish. It is true that both German and English banks take deposits. They both discount bills and make advances on security. But the methods of business are entirely different. German banks promote companies. I hope no English bank will ever be so foolish. They go into highly speculative syndicates and they are partners in numberless industrial enterprises. They take astounding risks and they are the abject servants of the State. The Deutsche Bank has invested some ten or fifteen millions sterling in the Baghdad Railway. It did this not because the investment was sound, but because its Imperial master ordered it to put up the money. The Dresdner and the Disconto have also sunk very large sums in banks and enterprises whose principal object was not the making of money, but the building-up of a German empire overseas. If Germany wins this war such specu-

lations may prove of value. If she loses it the whole of the money, which must amount to well over a hundred millions, is gone. There is no reason why London should not support one or two industrial banks on the lines of the foreign banks. There is plenty of work for such finance. But God forbid that our great joint stock banks should mix themselves up in such enterprises.

Our joint stock banks have not the special training necessary to make a success of an industrial bank. Foreign banks have most elaborate information bureaus in which are employed a highly-trained staff, who go all over the world collecting information and sifting facts. They never plunge into an enterprise until they have spent much time and money upon elaborate studies. They gladly pay high prices for special information and they neglect no means of acquiring such information. English banks take no risks and they do not think they need special information. They have a great dislike for ideas. They consider them unpractical. But to an industrial bank an idea may be of immense value and worth buying at a high price.

The English joint stock bank is like no other institution in the world. Its capital is ridiculously small. For example, twenty-nine of the leading banks have deposits and current accounts amounting to £997,790,924, yet the total capital is only £49,356,020, or 4·4 per cent. of the total assets. Thus the dividends paid are large. The average on twenty banks works out at 16 per cent. The provincial banks pay rather less than the great London banks, but nearly all pay 10 per cent. or over, whilst some pay as much as 17½ per cent. Yet the leading bank shares can be purchased to yield from 6 to 6½ per cent. The bank does not make much money out of its business if we take into account the funds employed. Indeed, the average earnings of the joint stock banks is only 1·38 per cent. on the total assets in the business.

All the banks have large reserve funds—large as compared with the capital, I should say, but small as compared with deposits and current accounts. For example, twenty-nine banks, with a capital of £49,356,000, possess reserves of £32,613,000, which is only 2·7 per cent. of total assets. But we must not forget that all well-managed banks—and the bulk of them are run on sound lines—depreciate liber-

ally. The heavy fall in securities has compelled this. We can safely say that twenty-five to thirty millions have been written off in the past quarter of a century. In the past year twenty-two banks wrote off three millions. This, of course, means that when prices appreciate the banks will have large hidden reserves, which will go to strengthen their position, and it also means that by vigorous writing down their present position is sound.

The banks utilise the bulk of the deposits and current accounts in making advances. Some banks separate bills and advances, some do not. It is a great pity that all banks do not present their accounts in uniform manner. During the past year nearly all the banks have reduced the item of advances. The percentage, which in 1914 was 54·6, has fallen to 42. Advances carefully made to good clients are sound, and if a bank takes care that no loan gets stale, not a word can be said against such a method of using the money of the public. But the most liquid form of advance is a bill, and I am sorry that banks do not lay themselves out for more bill business. As far as the figures show—and we can only calculate on those banks which separate bills from advances—barely 5 per cent. of total funds is invested in bills. This should be largely increased. During the past year, owing to war conditions, the banks have had no choice in the matter, for good trade bills have been scarce.

Investments are and have long been much too popular with bank managers. They are the most dangerous method of employing funds. When a panic comes the Stock Exchange is affected and stocks and shares cannot be sold. Thus, at the very moment when a bank needs all its resources it finds far too much locked up. Most of the banks have been gradually reducing this item. But the war has stopped them from carrying this sound policy into effect. They have been compelled to subscribe heavily to the various war loans, with the result that the item of investments has risen £183,372,000, and the percentage has jumped from 15·2 in 1914 to 28·9 in 1915. Unfortunately, we must expect the item to show further increase in the current year, but I sincerely hope that the Treasury will refrain from putting pressure upon the banks. They have been most loyal in buying Treasuries—indeed,

one shrewdly suspects that they have bought more than they should have done. But a three months' Treasury is a splendid security, very liquid and perfectly safe. Only we do not want too many of them.

Cash at call always seems to me a misnomer. It is not really cash at all, but money lent out to Lombard Street. Some banks include in this item advances made from account to account in the Stock Exchange. But this "cash" can never be called in. If it were Lombard Street would stop working and the Stock Exchange collapse. In consequence of the war, Lombard Street has not needed much cash and the Stock Exchange has no longer any open accounts to finance each fortnight. Therefore "cash at call" has fallen £34,636,000, and the percentage has tumbled from 10·9 to 6·3, and may this year show a still further drop. Bankers have always considered this money at call to be their second line of defence. But when war broke out the second line proved to be quite useless. Lombard Street could not pay up and the Stock Exchange was closed.

Cash in hand sounds much more solid and really has a definite existence as cash. But how much is actually in the coffers of each individual bank and how much is in the Bank of England no one can say. One bank, the Union of London and Smiths, is quite frank. It separates the item and shows £5,737,383 deposited at the Bank of England. The London City and Midland tells us that it holds seven millions in gold, but does not say how much is at home and how much at the Bank of England. It is well known that some of the other banks have also accumulated a gold hoard; in my opinion a wise policy. Cash has risen during 1915 no less than £60,290,000, and the percentage figure is up from 13·4 to 16·6. This is taking the average of all the banks, but many banks show a much higher percentage. For example, Lloyds, an admirably managed institution, shows a ratio of cash to liabilities of 23·4 per cent., which is the highest of all the great banks. Next in order comes the London County and Westminster with 21·7, then the London and South-Western with 21·2, and the London City and Midland with 20·2. But almost all the London banks show cash percentages above the mean of the twenty-nine banks on whose figures the average

is based. It has not been easy to keep the cash figures high during the past year, because the Government demands have been insistent.

But when we remember that we have been at war eighteen months the bank balance-sheets are very remarkable. The Treasury has placed about one hundred millions of currency notes and over four hundred and thirty millions of Treasury bills. Two big War Loans have been made and Exchequer bonds to the tune of one hundred millions have been sold. All this is, of course, merely a question of credits, and money lent to the Government comes back sooner or later in the form of deposits. But the banks have handled their side of the machinery with great skill and the financial public is proud to see the result. As far as I know, the German banks have issued no figures, though they may arrive in the course of the next few months. It will be interesting to compare them.

I should not omit to mention that the joint stock banks combined to open credits with their correspondents in the United States and thus helped to finance our exports and sustain the exchange. Their accounts show an increase in acceptances of £14,240,000, due no doubt to the arrangement made with the British Government.

We may rely upon the banks doing their share of the financial business of the war in a careful and methodical fashion. They will certainly oppose any wild-cat schemes for raising money, such as forced loans, lotteries, or issues of premium bonds. They know that they have only about two hundred millions of cash, and that no power on earth can increase this sum other than by increase in exports and decrease in imports. We must pay for the war by the creation of credits and taxation, and if the Government be wise it will work hand in hand with bankers and not irritate and oppose them. We had a sad example of such stupidity in the recent refusal to allow Barclays to amalgamate with the United Counties. The British banks are as necessary to our huge foreign trade as is our Navy, and the Government should not forget this—they hold the whole liquid capital of the country. Their responsibility is enormous. But they are ardently patriotic, absolutely honest, and very cautious.

# Books

## ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

CONTEMPORARY BELGIAN LITERATURE. By JETHRO BITHELL. Fisher Unwin. 7*s*. 6*d*.

First of all there is the question as to whether Belgian literature as such exists at all. There are many who deny it, and several of Belgium's foremost writers who use the French language imperatively assert their unique association with French literature. But, on the other hand, from the Flemish or Walloon writers, such as Leopold Courrouble, Eekhoud, Elskamp, Gilkin, and Demolder, there emanates a literary atmosphere that is characteristic of the Low Countries. These "fransquillons" and "flamingants" have not yet settled the question between them.

In any case there is the geographical distinction, and using that Mr. Bithell has made a useful book full of perceptions as well as facts. He gives us a rough suggestion of the difference between the literature of the Flemish and that of the Walloons when he says that the former is a literature of images; the latter a literature of ideas.

IMAGINATIONS AND REVERIES. By A. E. Maunsell. 5*s*.

A. E. is a figure who is better understood in Ireland than in England. He is in the latter country vaguely associated with mysticism, whereas on the contrary he is a most practical man, as his work on the *Irish Homestead* proves. His mysticism is mainly developed in his paintings, which are to him a kind of hobby. This book touches various phases of his life-work, none of which has been nobler or gives better promise of enduring than his labour for the national Irish ideal. A. E. has done a great deal for modern Ireland, as much, one might say, in the literary and political-philosophical way as Yeats. He has conceived it part of his mission to blow on the old embers of

Ireland's soul and give them new life. It is true that he has helped to keep the ideal Ireland alive, the only Ireland that matters, since the rest will follow if it is well with that.

## FICTION

MOBY LANE. By A. NEIL LYONS. John Lane. 5*s.* net.

Of these little *genre* pictures of rural Sussex the cantankerous critic might say that some were rather restless in composition and others betrayed a certain self-consciousness on the part of the author—a certain striving after effect. But even then he would have to admit that the majority were good and many of them excellent. And, anyhow, what do we want with a cantankerous critic just now? This is not the moment to say unkind things about cheerful and lively and veracious sketches like these. Mr. Neil Lyons may verge, and sometimes trespass, on the grotesque. Why not? So do his originals. And then, his humour is always sane and human. The cleanliness of his outlook, the fertility of invention, the sympathetic and shrewd treatment: these are merits that must strike the most casual reader of the volume. What is not so obvious is the severe restraint which he has imposed upon himself in the delineation of these types.

OLD DELABOLE. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Heinemann. 6*s.*

A story of the Western people in whom Mr. Phillpotts delights, and whose fascination he can put in print more convincingly than any other writer now at work. Old Delabole is the name of a slate quarry, and the persons of the tale are all concerned in various ways with the getting of slate. Hence a setting new to fiction. There is a genuine and novel thrill in the chief incident—a landslip that threatens to ruin Delabole, and the human lives dependent upon it. This calamity, from the moment when the first slight warnings of it are detected till that of its long-expected happening, holds the reader in a fine suspense, and comes at last in a chapter as vivid as anything Mr. Phillpotts has written. Throughout, the dialogue is rich in Cornish idiom and dialect. I liked especially the local use of "adventurers" as meaning "shareholders." There is consolation in this.

## BOOKS

### HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

THE JOURNALS OF LADY KNIGHTLEY OF FAWSLEY. Edited by JULIA CARTWRIGHT (MRS. ADY). John Murray. 12*s*. net.

This volume contains selections from the earlier half of the diaries kept by Lady Knightley continuously from 1856 till her death in 1913. They are a record of the life of one of the most active and outstanding women of her time, whom circumstances brought into contact with almost all the notable persons of the Victorian era. She herself, by birth, breeding, and tastes, was in many ways a personality of remarkable contrasts. A Tory of Tories, her hatred for democracy was only equalled by her passionate desire for the progress of women towards emancipation. The last of the historical *grandes dames*, she was also among the pioneers of feminine revolt. Her early and intimate association, as Louisa Bowater, with the Court gives to these diaries the special, rather pathetic, interest that always attaches to pictures of Queen Victoria. Miss Bowater's father and the Prince Consort died on the same day. One understands how a coincidence like this would endear his family to the Queen. Throughout the diaries abound in vivid and interesting notes of public persons as an unusually observant critic saw them. Though it is scarcely a collection in which one would expect to find good stories (in the technical sense) a repartee of the Duchess of Gordon deserves quotation as such. Mr. Whitbread had remonstrated with her for permitting so indelicate a dance as the valse. "Why, Mr. Whitbread! I thought you were the last person to object to the liberty of the press!" We now look forward to the later diaries.

### TRAVEL AND GEOGRAPHY

NAPLES AND SOUTHERN ITALY. By EDWARD HULTON. Methuen. 6*s*. net.

When the war is over many of us will doubtless be tempted to explore the byeways of Southern Italy in the author's company. The book is of the right length for its purpose, attractively illustrated, and contains a sufficient amount of historical and antiquarian information to satisfy "intelligent" travellers.

## WAR

THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, APRIL TO AUGUST, AND THE EVACUATION OF WARSAW, 1915. By STANLEY WASHBURN. Melrose. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN THE RUSSIAN RANKS. By JOHN MORSE. Duckworth. 6*s.*

Mr. Washburn has been well advised not to listen to those friends who tried to discourage him from this second volume of field notes. They are contemporary documents from the pen of an alert and cultured eye-witness; that alone would give them a standing. One has only to read the terrible chapter on the gas-poisoning or those pages describing the exodus from Warsaw to realise their great value. They go well with Mr. John Morse's account of ten months' fighting in Poland—a book which we have no hesitation in calling one of the very best which the war has produced.

FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE. By DR. E. J. DILLON. Hodder and Stoughton. 5*s.* net.

Dr. Dillon has the distinction of being known as the man who sent whole articles on the subject of Bulgaria, telling the truth, hardly a word of which got published. Be that as it may, Dr. Dillon is one of the few Englishmen who thoroughly understand Europe and whose judgment is reliable; whatever he writes is interesting; at the moment his volume on Italy is of good actual interest. His point is that Italy has still no military quarrel with Germany and that her actions should be judged accordingly, nor does he believe that Italy is bound by the compact signed between the Entente in September, 1914. The Italian case, what Italy has done, what are her aspirations and difficulties—these matters are admirably elucidated. The book, so clearly written, so prophetic, so just in its perspective and estimate of events, makes it all the more difficult to understand how our Foreign Office blundered so fatally in the Balkans. If only for that reason it should be read, but it ought to be read in any case.

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